NEW TESTAMENT NAMES

M. B. RYAN

NEW TESTAMENT NAMES

A Study of Various Scriptural Appellations Used to Designate the Followers of Christ

By
M. B. RYAN

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INTRODUCTION

NO one believes the familiar saw, "There's nothing in a name." Every one believes there is something in his own name.

Names stand for things. There is in the name all that there is in the thing designated. A great thing makes a name great.

By this test, New Testament names are the greatest. In the sphere of religion Jesus Christ stands in the supreme place. The things that preceded him have been given new significance by him. The things that proceeded from him partake of his own significance and glory. The relationships which he confirms and establishes are the highest possible. The experiences of the soul in entering into, and maintaining, these relationships, are the supreme experiences of life. The result to the soul, from these relationships, is beyond measure or comparison. Who

can estimate the significance of salvation? Who can measure the meaning of fellowship with God? Who can describe the value or potency of Christlikeness?

New Testament names stand for the things of Christ. Some of them are old names, familiar to us in the Old Testament; but they have been lifted to new heights and filled with new meaning. Others of them came in with the new era which Christ inaugurated, and are charged with the immeasurable meaning of his work.

The following studies are an attempt at an appreciation of some New Testament names. It is believed that we can enjoy the life with Christ only in the measure in which we comprehend its meaning. For our enjoyment here is not sensuous, but spiritual. If we remain ignorant of what Christ has accomplished for us—of its meaning to us and for us—we miss the very source of Christian joy. We need the light of knowledge. What a wellspring of joy it is to be able to say "I know." What a gracious wish

of the old apostle that his converts might "be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." It was only thus that they could "walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."[1]

New Testament names are descriptive. The life with Christ is variously set forth in them. They are not unrelated or conflicting. If there is more than one name applied to Christ's followers, it is because the life to which he leads us is many-sided. The different names are terms by which the Holy Spirit sets forth the richness of our relationship with Christ.

A reverent study of the names helps us to understand and appreciate our heritage in Christ. This has been the sole aim in the writing of these chapters. There has come a personal enrichment in these studies, that the writer would fain pass on to others. If, in only a small

[1] Col. 1: 9, 10.

measure, others shall be helped to share his larger joy, this will be good recompense.

Such studies can not, in the nature of the case, be exhaustive. Who can describe the glory of the mountains, or transfer to canvas the majesty of the sea? We can stand before them, with raptured eyes and bounding hearts. But their measure is beyond us.

So, in contemplating the life with Christ. All its measures are infinite. We can but stand on its fringes and mutely gaze on its heights and depths. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." May we not also say that no tongue can tell what we already are? If we be joined with Christ, we have partaken of infinity.

We may, however, "speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen." And the names which Christ has given to us help us to value these inestimable things.

With these imperfect messages the sincere prayer of the writer would be

linked, that readers and author may alike come "unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."[1]

CALGARY, Canada.

[1] Col. 2: 2, 3.

I

DISCIPLES

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."—JESUS.

THE term "disciple" is used seventy-three times in the Gospel of Matthew. In sixty-nine of these instances it is applied to the followers of Jesus. Mark uses it forty-four times, in only three of which he applies it to others than followers of Jesus. In the thirty-eight instances in which Luke uses it, only three refer to others; and in John's Gospel there are four applications of the term to others, out of seventy-seven instances of the use of the word. In the Book of Acts the word occurs thirty-one times, always designating followers of Christ. The Epistles do not use the term. Its use is peculiar to the records of the early period of the gospel, the time of heralding and inaugurating the Kingdom.

The commission as recorded by Matthew makes the great task of the church to be the making and training of disciples. There is wondrous breadth and scope to this work. The field of operation is "all the nations." Back of it is the authority of Christ: "all authority in heaven and on earth." Associated with the command is a designation of a means to be used in the process: "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Appended to the commission is the gracious promise: "And lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age."[1]

It is plain from this that the thing designated by the term "disciple" is a significant thing in the religion of Jesus. It is a relation which not only existed in his personal ministry in Judea and Galilee, but which he intended should be perpetuated down to the end of the age, and which should be realized among all the nations. It is a constituent element in the progress of his cause.

[1] Matt. 28: 19, 20.

DISCIPLES

A "disciple" is one who is taught or trained. It is the relation of scholars to a teacher that is indicated by the term. The distinctive thing about the use of the word in the New Testament is that it designates a relation to Jesus, as Teacher. Almost universally, there, this is true. There were disciples of John the Baptist, and disciples of the Pharisees. But the "disciples" of the New Testament books were followers of the young Galilean prophet, learners under him, differentiated from all others by having a different Teacher. The term thus emphasizes the thought of Christ as a TEACHER, and the relation of men to him as *scholars,* being taught and trained under him.

Two great facts receive emphasis here:

I. THE NEED OF TEACHING IN THE THINGS OF GOD. Ignorance of God is the fruitful mother of the sins which burden and destroy men.[1] On the other hand, the hardening of the heart which sin induces, deepens our ignorance of

[1] 1 Pet. 1: 14.

God.[1] Man's life, in sin, swings in a vicious circle, from ignorance to iniquity, and from iniquity to deeper ignorance, the maelstrom ever converging toward the vortex of ruin.

To know God and his will, man needs to be taught. There are many things man can find out for himself. He can discover matter, its properties, its laws, its history, by search. But spirit can only be known by revelation. God is Spirit. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."[2]

Spirit is known by what it says, or by what it does. There are some things we can learn about God by viewing what he does. His works speak his praise. The heavens declare his glory. The firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night

[1] Eph. 4: 18, 19; Col. 1: 21. [2] Job 11: 7-9.

showeth knowledge.[1] "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity."[2] The providences of God are also vocal. "Be still, and know that I am God," is said in view of what God is doing in the life of the world. "The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted." "Come, behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariots in the fire."[3] He leaves not himself without witness, in that he does good and gives us from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.[4]

But the book of nature, while it tells us there is a God, and that he is a Being of divine power, glorious and skillful and beneficent, does not tell us what he would have us do. Teachers are necessary to bring a knowledge of his will.

[1] Ps. 19: 1, 2. [2] Rom. 1: 20. [3] Ps. 46: 6-10. [4] Acts 14: 17.

In every age God has supplied man's need for revelation. In visions and dreams, and through angel visits, in the early days, men learned God's mind toward them. Later, his will to his chosen people was codified and published through his great servant, Moses. Still later, other prophets came as teachers of God's will, expounding the law, revealing new truth, illuminating the pathway of duty. And all the while, the eyes of men were turned anxiously toward the future, where it was believed the ultimate teacher in the things of God would appear, and where was to be realized that gracious promise: "All thy children shall be taught of Jehovah; and great shall be the peace of thy children."[1]

This teaching of God is a necessity, because the world is blinded. Men have, in many spheres, vastly broadened our knowledge by investigation. But it remains true that the world by its wisdom knows not God.[2] The humiliating fact stands, that many who have been heralded

[1] Isa. 54: 13. [2] 1 Cor. 1: 21.

the loudest as discoverers and exponents of scientific truth, allege—and their allegation is a confession—that they can not find God. The microscope does not discover him. The telescope does not reveal him. The scalpel does not liberate him. The drag-net does not confine him. "And therefore," say the savants, "God is not."

Vain men! Why expect to find Him thus? Their agnosticism is not a disproof of God. It is a proof of their own lack of vision.

Over against this failure of men to discover God, and along with the fact that God has made himself known through teachers, in all ages, stands another great fact for our consideration:

II. JESUS IS THE SUPREME TEACHER OF GOD. It was to be expected that somewhere in man's history one should come who should be a Master in this, the highest of the philosophies; one who could make God known perfectly; one who should be an authoritative teacher of the will of God. Jesus Christ is that ultimate Teacher.

1. Jesus claims this place.[1]

2. God assigns him this place. "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him."[2]

3. The Holy Spirit asserts his fitness for it: "In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."[3]

4. The teaching of Jesus stands the test. We are conscious, as we hear him, that we have at last found God.

And that satisfaction is not disturbed by the succession of events. Many of the philosophies of the ages have gone to the scrap-heap. More of them are on their way there. The teaching of Jesus gains in freshness and pertinency and power with the passage of time.

So, to be a disciple of Jesus meets the need of the soul for adequate and ultimate instruction in the things of God.

Discipleship with Jesus has a twofold objective:

First, in the disciple himself. Jesus said to the people of his day: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and

[1] John 14: 6-10. [2] Mark 9: 7. [3] Col. 2: 3.

the truth shall make you free."[1] Here is a wonderful result.

Sin is error—missing the mark. Sin is begotten of falsehood, and mothered by ignorance. The truth is God's antidote for sin.

Jesus is the Truth. He is the teacher of truth. His teaching is not alone in what he says, but in what he is. He is God manifest. He is the Word which, in the beginning, was with God and was God, and which became flesh and dwelt among men.[2] He is full of grace and truth, and men behold his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father. The words of Jesus are the truth of God. "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me."[3] Men are challenged to test them, and prove whether or not they are from God.

"Abide in my word." That is true discipleship. That means living the Word. It is the road to knowledge. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is from God or

[1] John 8: 31, 32. [2] John 1: 1-14. [3] John 7: 16.

whether I speak from myself." "Ye shall know the truth."

How true all this is to the very nature of things. We know by doing. Do we ever know without doing? Theoretical knowledge is knowledge of the theory. Practical knowledge is knowledge of the thing. Jesus is a teacher of life. When we live his teaching we understand him; we know the truth.

Sin is bondage. "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin."[1] Sin is king in the sinner's life. It reigns in his mortal body. He is forced to obey the lusts thereof. He presents his members to it, as instruments of unrighteousness. The law of sin which is in his members wars against the law of his mind and brings him into captivity.[2] The truth makes him free.

Truth frees us from error. It is light, dispelling darkness and showing us all things in their true shapes. Truth frees us from ignorance. It is the mountain-top, from which we can view the

[1] John 8: 34. [2] Rom. 6: 12, 13; 7: 23.

whole landscape, as against the crater where our vision is circumscribed, and where what we see is distorted. Truth lived, frees us from friction. The true disciple of Jesus no longer lives at cross-purposes with the Almighty. He wills to do the will of God, and life is attuned to the eternal harmony; it runs smoothly.

What an illumination is here. What a revolution. What a tremendous vantage-point for life. Now all the pregnant powers of life can bring forth their true issues. The noble aspirations of the soul are free now to mount the heights. Life is in its native soil. It can burgeon and bloom in beauty, and find its utmost fulfillment.

Second, in others, through the disciple. The disciple of Jesus is a channel. Through him, and on account of him, the blessing of Jesus is to pass on to others.

This is what Jesus calls fruit-bearing. The disciple of Jesus is a branch in the vine. The disciple is in Christ, as the branch is in the vine. The life of Jesus

is in the disciple, as the life of the vine is in the branch. The blessing of Jesus for men comes through his disciples, as the fruit of the vine grows on the branches. The fruit is the only thing about the vine in which its life can be passed on to nourish and support other life. The ministry of the vine depends upon the branches.

The true test of discipleship is in giving Christ to others. Neither God nor Christ has any honor in a fruitless, follower. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples."[1]

[1] John 15: 8.

II

FRIENDS

"I have called you friends."—Jesus.

A FRIEND is a lover.

It is a significant thing that Jesus offers to make his disciples his friends. It is not every teacher who takes his scholars into such close relationship to himself. Few teachers, if any, make that favor general among their scholars. Jesus makes the relationship possible to all his disciples.

This name signifies an advance in discipleship. Rather, it indicates what is the true character of discipleship with Jesus. It is not merely a corporate relation. It is personal. It is not a conventional connection between master and pupil. It is a heart-union.

Friendship has been called the "master passion." And rightly so. What

splendid examples of its power we have in human history. How it burns away the hindrances and fuses hearts together. How it binds men with cords that nothing can break. How it defies even death, and continues green and beautiful when it has but a memory to feed upon.

It is to this master passion that Jesus invites his disciples. Nay, this is the very essence of discipleship. "Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you; abide ye in my love."[1] Here is a threefold strand of love: the love of the Father for Christ; the love of Christ, the Master, for the disciple; and the love of the disciple, doubling back to Christ, and to the Father, who gave him. This realm of love is the abiding-place of the disciple. "Abide ye here" is the Master's gracious word.

We are accustomed to the thought of Jesus as our friend, our lover. "Who loved me, and gave himself up for me."[2] But we are apt to think of his friendship as being that of a benefactor, a patron,

[1] John 15: 9. [2] Gal. 2: 20.

so to speak, far above us, separated from us by his rank, but stooping down to us to confer a benefit, as some powerful and wealthy man might befriend a destitute neighbor. This offer of Jesus puts a new face on the matter. It is not alone that he is our friend, but that we are his friends. It is not alone that he is stooping to us, but that he is lifting us to him. It is as though the wealthy and powerful man should make the outcast pauper a member of his family, to sit at his table and live on most intimate terms with him. This is what Jesus does with his scholars. There are two significant things to be noticed about this friendship.

I. Its Condition. "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you."[1]

On first thought this is a drastic test. It is asking much. In any one else it would strike us as being arbitrary—perhaps tyrannical. "You can be my friends if you do as I say."

There seems, at first sight, to be noth-

[1] John 15: 14.

ing mutual about that condition. It is all one-sided. In any one else that would seem to make even the beginning of friendship impossible; or, if friendship were begun, it would soon be ended. It is a great strain on friendship always to be yielding to commands. He who can always command is in danger of losing his respect for his subordinate. He who must always obey is in danger of losing his love for his superior.

But with Jesus it is not so. We instinctively feel that this test is just; that he has the right to make it; and that it is consistent with our own dignity and rights to accept it. Moreover, we find that it works out well. Instead of ending friendship, it cements it. The more implicitly we obey him, the warmer our love for him grows. We find that all his commands are given in love and are meant for our good. We find that the way of obedience to him is the way of life for us. As it is with other friends, when they induce us to do things which turn out to our advantage, we are thankful to

them for it; our love for them grows. We see how pure and disinterested their friendship is, and we count it an honor and a joy to have them as our friends. So it is when we do the things which Jesus commands us. Every act of obedience to him brings its blessing and leads into happiness. So our friendship is strengthened.

This is one of the strongest proofs of the genuineness of the religion of Christ. It works out well. By doing it —living it—we prove its worth. It commends itself by use.

No antichristian philosophy can stand that test. There are many "doubts" and "denials" and "disbeliefs" of this religion, and many substitutes are offered for it. But few of those who profess them have the courage to live them out. And were they to attempt to do so, they would see at once how false and unsatisfactory they are. Their use would be the surest and speediest road to their overthrow. But when a man obeys Christ, he finds himself in the way of life, a way that

broadens its blessings as he goes on. He finds that the prohibited things are the bad things, the destructive things; and that all the demanded things are good things, adding to him, enriching him, crowning his life with blessing.

If this were not true, Jesus could never have risked the matter of friendship on such a test as this. He does not bid for our friendship, first of all, on what he is going to give us, but on what he is going to demand of us. That would ensure the ruin of friendship if his commands were not wholly beneficent. For friendship is a tender plant. It withers when mistrust has taken the place of faith.

Now, this puts the matter of friendship with Jesus where all can reach it. The friendships of earth often rest on bases that are accidental or arbitrary. Sometimes it is the accident of birth. Sometimes the possession of wealth or power determines it. Sometimes it grows out of congenial temperament.

Here, none of these things prevail.

Few of us could be friends of Jesus if they did. When Jesus puts friendship with him on the basis of obedience to him, he puts it where any one can fulfill the condition. For his commandments are not grievous. They can be obeyed by the humblest and the weakest. For "my yoke is easy and my burden is light."[1]

But, how shall the disciple begin? Where is the starting-point in this pathway of obedience?

Right at our own door. Jesus gives us a test commandment. He tries us out with a demand which we might be inclined to shun. Were we left to our own choice, we might choose something far different. "Distance lends enchantment," and we might choose the thing that was far off, as a measure of our spirit.

But Jesus bids us commence at home. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you."[2]

A very necessary thing in the big

[1] Matt. 11: 30. [2] John 15: 12.

school he is founding. Yet, how often in schools do jealousies and rivalries reign among the scholars. This school is also a family. The scholars are taken into equally intimate relations with the Master. The Master has loved each and all equally. "As I have loved you." Here is the example. Here is the measure also: "Try it. See if you have the root of this matter of friendship in you."

After all, that's a sensible test. To be a friend of Jesus is to be a lover of Jesus—to be a lover of God. But he who says "I love God," while he hateth his brother, "is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen."[1] And Jesus says, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."[2] "He that loveth me not keepeth not my words."[3] There is no room to balk at this commandment while we aspire to be his friends.

II. Its Results. 1. Revelation.

[1] 1 John 4: 20. [2] John 14: 15. [3] John 14: 24.

Friendship is a relation of mutual confidence. The heart unlocks itself to a friend. Concealment gives place to revealment.

That is what is meant when we are told God spake to Moses face to face, "as a man speaketh unto his friend."[1] That is what is meant when Abraham is called "the friend of God."[2] God revealed himself to Abraham, took Abraham into his confidence, told him about his plans, gave him promises that involved the far-distant future. And Abraham believed God, accepted his assurances, and was called the friend of God.

Now, Jesus says: "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." There are no confidences there. But: "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you."[3]

We have here the clue to the knowledge of God and his will. We have here

[1] Ex. 33: 11. [2] Jas. 2: 23. [3] John 15: 15.

the real outcome of discipleship. The scholar of Christ has just one main quest—the knowledge of God. That, Jesus says, is "eternal life."[1] The secret of that is friendship with Jesus. He is the revealer of the Father. No one knoweth who the Father is save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.[2] Jesus wills to reveal God to his friends, to those who love him.

There is a great philosophy back of this. Revelation is not a matter of giving, only. It is a matter of receiving, as well. If there is beauty, there must be sight to perceive it. If there is harmony, there must be hearing to appreciate it.

There is a blindness of the mind which shuts out "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ."[3] There is an opening of the eyes necessary, that men "may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God."[4] Love is the great eye-opener. Friendship

[1] John 17: 3. [2] Luke 10: 22. [3] 2 Cor. 4: 4. [4] Acts 26: 18.

with Jesus prepares the heart to see God. Jesus reveals God to his friends because he can. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."[1] Discipleship with Jesus is the condition of knowing God. It is to those whom God has given him that Jesus gives the knowledge of God, which is eternal life.[2] And friendship with Jesus is the essence of discipleship. Those who come to know God come also to know Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

If the knowledge of God were simply theoretical, it might be different. Then Jesus might sit, as a professor teaching a science or a philosophy, with nothing depending on his personal relation to his pupils. But the saving knowledge of God is personal. Jesus not only teaches God. He is God. To those who are his friends he gives himself, as any true friend does. So that we know him, and,

[1] 1 Cor. 2: 14. [2] John 17: 2, 3.

knowing him, we know God. The knowledge of Jesus the Christ, and of God, is one.

2. Comfort. The friendship of Christ is a guarantee of all needed blessing. A true friend is always willing to help his friends. There is none so willing as Jesus. What he has done for us is the earnest of what he is ready to do.

Then, Jesus is able. That can not always be said of friends. Jesus is able, even unto the uttermost need.[1] All resources are in his power.[2] Moreover, Jesus is eager to help and to bless. Nothing is more striking than his solicitude over men. He would have brooded over Jerusalem as a mothering hen broods her chicks.[3] His solicitude gives our souls rest. Our great Friend will supply our needs. We can obey the injunction: "Be anxious about nothing. But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." And we realize

[1] Heb. 7: 25. [2] 1 Pet. 3: 22. [3] Luke 13: 34.

the gracious promise: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."[1] We put Christ to the test and find him true when he says: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."[2]

3. Redemption. Any good friendship is a blessing. To love a good person is to partake of his goodness. To love Christ, to come near to him in friendship, to obey him, to yield life to him, is to escape out of the power of sin, to rise above self, to share his life; in a word, to be saved. When he is with us and we with him; when he is our familiar friend, our confidant, his purity burns out our lust, his nobility shames our smallness and meanness all away; his strength lifts us and girds us, his life thrills us and fills us, until we become like him. That is the sublime end and object of all redemptive purpose and

[1] Phil. 4: 6, 7. [2] Matt. 11: 29.

provision. The riches of the glory of God's great mystery of salvation is Christ in us, the hope of glory.[1] Lost humanity is restored, thus, to the image and fellowship of God.

[1] Col. 1: 27.

III

CHRISTIANS

"If any man suffer as a Christian."—PETER.

IT has come to pass that the name applied to Christ's followers least frequently in the New Testament, is the most popular and universal now used of them.

There are three instances of the use of the name "Christian" in the New Testament. Luke says that the name originated in Antioch in Syria. It was after Paul had come to help Barnabas in the work there. Sometime, during that great year in the life of that young church, "the disciples were called Christians."[1] There is not agreement among Bible students as to the origin of the name. It is not a vital matter in the present discussion. If it was given by

[1] Acts 11: 26.

the apostles, it would bear the credentials of apostolic inspiration and authority. If it was given by outsiders, and adopted by the church under apostolic leadership, the adoption was an authoritative sanction of its use. The pertinence of the name rests not so much upon its source, as upon its fitness. The form of the name would indicate at once to the people of that day the meaning which it still bears—"followers of Christ." It is often pointed out that in its construction it represents a significant conjuncture in spiritual things. "Christ" is Greek. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew "Messiah." The termination "ian" is Latin, signifying "follower of." The name thus represents the three great divisions of the human family, as well as the three great languages. As the superscription over the cross was written in the three languages, Hebrew, Latin and Greek, so this name represents them. It has the elements of cosmopolitanism in it.

The second instance of the New Testament use of the name is most interesting.

Paul had passed through most of his great ministry as an apostle. He was just completing a two years' imprisonment in Cæsarea, and was awaiting passage to Rome, to have his case heard, on appeal, before the Imperial court.

Chained to a guard, he stood before King Agrippa, and, in the presence of a noted assembly, representing the height of worldly wealth and power, told the story of his conversion to Christ.

It was at a dramatic moment in that recital that King Agrippa said, perhaps in a tone of contempt: "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian."

Paul does not use the name in his reply. But he acknowledges the relation. "I would to God that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds," is a confession that he is himself what he would have these others to be—a Christian.[1]

The one other instance of the use of

[1] Acts 26: 28, 29.

the name was years after this. Persecutions were arising against the followers of Jesus, and perils were thickening about the groups which here and there professed his name. Peter, the rock-man, writes to his brethren, widely scattered in the Gentile world, not to think it strange concerning the fiery trial which was among them. Christ had suffered for them. They might rejoice to be partakers of his sufferings. It is a blessed thing to be reproached in the name of Jesus. It would be a shame for any of them to suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a meddler in other men's matters. But if any man suffered as a Christian—that was no shame. It was a glorious thing "to glorify God in this name."[1]

It is evident that, at the time Peter wrote, the name had come to be worn generally by the followers of Jesus, of both Jewish and Gentile peoples, and that it was recognized by the outside world as their distinctive appellation.

What does the name "Christian"

[1] 1 Pet. 4: 12-16.

signify in the life of him who wears it?

There is, perhaps, no vantage-point, from which to study this name, that is equal to that afforded by the life of Paul. He was a Christian. He evidently shared the name when it was first used. Late in his wonderful career he proudly confessed it. Can we doubt that at the end of his course he still gloried in it? Can we take him as an example, to find out its meaning?

First of all, in the life of Paul, the name stood for a *conviction.* Paul has come to a new conviction about Jesus. Once he had repudiated Jesus. He is now convinced that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. As such, all the hopes of Israel are fulfilled in him. Not only so, all the needs of the world are met in him. The great facts of the gospel are involved. The death, the burial, the resurrection, of Jesus. His divine Sonship. His exaltation and Lordship. His pre-eminence and absoluteness.

How Paul, in his teaching, dwells on

these things. How striking the terms by which he sets them forth. These are, to him, the supreme facts. He contemplates Jesus on the throne. All facts of history are subordinate to that, in interest and importance. All things else are of significance only in relation to this exalted Christ.

This is evidently the faith of the early disciples. It is the burden of Peter's sermon on Pentecost, and of Stephen's momentous address. The essence of apostolic preaching was "Christ," and the things of his Kingdom. The "word" which the disciples went everywhere preaching when persecution scattered them, was this Christhood of Jesus, this divinity and pre-eminence of their Lord. The "Way" into which men and women entered in response to that message, was the way of surrender and service to the exalted Jesus.

This it was that must have struck that giddy, pleasure-loving, populace in Antioch; this presence in the preachers, and in their converts, of a new and sur-

prising conviction—a conviction that thrilled them, that clarified their thought, and gripped their conscience, and subdued their wills, until they were moved into complete divorcement from their old life, into supreme devotion to the new. It was an amazing thing that Jews were giving up their immemorial customs, for which they had hitherto been willing to suffer ridicule, and even death; and that Gentiles were forsaking the altars of their fathers and their countrymen; and that both were meeting and being bound together in a unity of conviction. And the obvious rallying-point was Christ. Christ, whom these new preachers were heralding. Christ, whom, as Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish people had repudiated. Christ, whom Gentiles had nailed to the cross. Now Jews and Gentiles were receiving him; Jews, as the long-looked-for Messiah; Gentiles, as the Lord and Saviour. Jews and Gentiles, as the Son of the living God. The Christ was supreme with these people. They were Christ-ians. The conviction of the

Christ was their distinguishing characteristic.

It was so with Paul. There is no accounting for his conversion, nor for his life, except as this conviction is considered. Great lives do not grow from shallow roots. Mighty streams are not gathered from meager and spasmodic fountains. Paul was not carried, like driftwood, on the bosom of the tide. He was rather like a mighty steamship, plowing its way straight toward its port in the teeth of the fiercest and most contrary gales. Nothing but an overwhelming conviction could have moved and sustained him. It was this conviction—the Christhood and divinity and preeminence of Jesus.

And that conviction is always an essential in Christian faith. Men talk of being "Christians" without Christ. That is to say, they will deny Jesus that place and character which apostolic teaching gives him. They will, they say, go back of the apostles to Jesus himself, and see in him simply the best and the

greatest of men. But nothing divine about him, save what is latent in every man, and possible to him. No miraculous birth. No significance in his death, save devotion to a great cause—one of many martyrdoms. No real and actual resurrection from the grave. No supreme exaltation as universal Lord. Just *one* of the great ones—the greatest *yet*. But not exclusive, and probably not final. *This* faith men will profess, and claim to be still—"Christians."

But this is not the Christian of the New Testament. It is not the Christian Saul of Tarsus was. This is a spurious "Christian," that does not deserve the name.

In the second place, this name stood, in Paul's case, for a *cause*. Paul had espoused the cause of Christ. With his whole heart he had espoused it. He was willing to live, and to die, for it. It was in pursuance of this great purpose that he came before Agrippa. He had been arrested and imprisoned as a preacher of Jesus. His appearance before Agrippa

was as a prisoner of the Lord—for the gospel's sake. His whole life was given up to the one great purpose of proclaiming Christ as King, and leading men to acknowledge him.

This is not surprising. Any real conviction must find expression. It is one of the axioms of psychology that an impulse, a conviction, an ideal, denied expression, dies out. That fact is being recognized more and more, and accounts for many significant changes in methods of education. It is this, too, which lies behind the positive requirements of revealed religion. The Old Bible writers were scientific educators, guided to this by the Spirit of God. The pilgrimages of Israel, up to Jerusalem; the great feasts; the sacrifices; the congregational rejoicing—all these were expressions of the national emotion and conviction, and reverence for Jehovah, which otherwise would have dwindled and disappeared. These opportunities for expression stimulated and kept fresh the fires of faith and devotion. They

fixed and fostered the religious spirit and consciousness, and contributed thus to the maintenance and growth of the religious life of the people.

The ordinances and institutions of the Christian religion, also, have their reason in this. Baptism gives opportunity for the conviction concerning Christ, and the impulse to receive him, to express themselves. It is a point where the individual can, by a conscious act of obedience and self-surrender, commit himself once for all to Christ. The assemblies of the believers, the public worship, the Lord's Supper central in the worship as a memorial institution, serve to give an outlet and fresh stimulus to the faith of the heart and the impulse to confess and honor Christ as Lord of the life. And the continuous service to which Christ calls men is a perpetual strengthener of conviction.

This espousal of the cause of Christ is a necessary part of the content of the name "Christian." The conviction without the cause would be abortive and

meaningless. Christ is not simply an idea. Christ is a person. And he is in the supreme personal relation to life. The supreme exigency of life is to get itself adjusted to him. The supreme task of the Christian is to proclaim Christ's right to rule in life, and to secure the recognition of that right on the part of men. The name "Christian" can never mean less than this to the true disciple of Jesus. It stands for all the enthusiasm of the recruit, for all the eagerness of the invader, for all the determination of the crusader, for all the imperial outlook and desire of the world conqueror. It can never meet its full significance in human life until Jesus Christ is acknowledged as universal sovereign.

It was a great issue that thrust itself to the front between Agrippa and Paul. Agrippa was a king. He held his kingship by appointment of the emperor of Rome. In him, as vassal, there was represented the might and the glory of the kingdoms of this world. All that the devil offered to Jesus in the wilder-

ness was here embodied before Paul.

Paul stood for the entire reversal of all this. He was an obscure prisoner, chained by an iron chain to a creature of this mighty world-power. He was, perhaps, pale from long imprisonment, and poorly clad. He was without friends and surrounded by watchful and implacable enemies. But he stood there in the presence of royalty, and in the midst of the fashion and power of this world, and claimed the right of Jesus the Christ to be King. It was Christ against Agrippa —against the emperor and the empire— and Paul was his champion. Nothing more dramatic has ever occurred.

Yet, the essence of that is inherent in the person and posture of every man who, at any time, worthily wears the name "Christian." The same issue is at stake—Christ against the world. The Christian has as his supreme cause, to make Christ King.

But, finally, the name "Christian" in Paul's life meant a *character*. This is its crowning significance. Conviction and

Cause issue in Character, as root and branches issue in fruit. This is their logical terminus, as it is also their necessary complement. It is the final term in a trinity, that completes the meaning of this new name.

This is the phase of it that is emphasized in Peter's use of the word. The antithesis there is striking—murderer, thief, evil-doer, meddler, *vs.* Christian. It is character that is here contrasted.

Here is where the supreme significance of Christianity was seen in the ancient world. Gentile life was largely a reign of lust, where impulse and passion were the determining factors. Even the Jew had as his motto, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

Jesus taught another doctrine. He taught purity, self-restraint, brotherliness, forgiveness, love, self-sacrifice, service for others.[1] And he lived what he taught. No man could be a true disciple of Jesus, a Christian, without attempting to make that teaching practical in his life.

[1] Matt. 5: 38-42.

No man could consistently espouse and champion that teaching without an honest effort to live it himself.

And Jesus made it possible for men to live it. He took men into vital relations with himself—made them his friends, made them sharers in his life. So there came into the lives of his followers an amazing transformation. The old man was gone, with the lusts thereof —put away—shamed out of place by this intimate fellowship with Christ. There was a new man, created of God in Christ Jesus. The world saw the spectacle of men who had once been slaves of lust living pure lives; of men who had long been known as hateful, and hating one another, living together in love. Men who had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, had been washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of God.[1] In the purlieus of Corinth and

[1] 1 Cor. 6: 11.

Antioch and Rome, there shone a new light. Over against the wreck and ruin which sin works, there stood a new type of character. The world had no counterpart to it. There was but one possible source to which it could be attributed—Christ. These men were "Christians."

A change as revolutionary had come upon Paul. As he looked back upon his past life he saw himself as the chief of sinners.[1] His sins were not of the same type as was true of many of whom he speaks. But they were as real, and perhaps more deadly. He was an "unbeliever," and unbelief is the all-comprehensive sin. He was a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious.[2] He had cherished threatening and slaughter in his heart, and had breathed them out against the disciples of the Lord.[3] In potency, he was a murderer.[4] He ravaged the church in Jerusalem, forcing his way into homes, and dragging men and women forcibly to prison.[5] He punished

[1] 1 Tim. 1: 15. [2] 1 Tim. 1: 13. [3] Acts 9: 1. [4] Matt. 5: 21, 22. [5] Acts 8: 3.

the disciples repeatedly in all the synagogues. He strove to make them blaspheme. He was exceedingly mad against them—frenzied. He persecuted them even unto strange cities.[1]

If hatred and vindictiveness and cruelty, and the murderous passion, are ruinous to character, then Paul's past had been as bad as he thought it. Beside these major passions of the natural heart, the lower lusts, though shameful and destructive, are of smaller weight.

Over against this forbidding picture we have to set that life which he lived by the faith of the Son of God. What a picture he gives us of the inner workings of his heart. What a life-story he tells. What a revelation of character, newly formed, transformed, under Christ. Who can sum up the significance of "gaining Christ," and being "found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith.

[1] Acts 26: 11.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death, if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead."[1] Was not that a wonderful change in the man who once disbelieved in Christ, and hated him and his people?

And what could exceed the intensity with which he devoted himself to this new life, this Christliness of conduct? It absorbed him. Like the contestant in the games, he threw his last ounce of effort into it. It was the "one thing" of his life—"forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[2]

What a changed attitude toward men, we see. The cruel persecutor and destroyer has become the eager and sacrificial savior. He would willingly sacrifice his own hopes, for the sake of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the

[1] Phil. 3: 8-11. [2] Phil. 3: 13, 14.

flesh.[1] Though he was free, he brought himself under bondage to all that he might gain the more. To the Jew he became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews: to them that were without law, as without law, that he might gain them. To the weak, he became weak, that he might gain the weak. He became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. And all this he did for the gospel's sake, that he might be a joint partaker thereof.[2]

What does it mean when a man, so callous to others' sufferings as he once was, could say: "We were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children; even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us"?[3] Or one so imperiously dominant of the consciences of others, saying: "Wherefore, if meat cause my brother to stumble, I will eat no meat while the

[1] Rom. 9: 3. [2] 1 Cor. 9: 19-22. [3] 1 Thess. 2: 7, 8.

world stands, that I cause not my brother to stumble."[1]

We are driven to the conviction that he spoke the truth when he said: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."[2] And we see here the ultimate meaning for Paul of his being a Christian.

So must it ever be—if "Christian" is to have its full significance for life. Christ's religion does not reach its logical conclusion in us until the Christ-character is reproduced. This is the Christian religion; viz., "Christ formed in you;"[3] "Christ in you, the hope of glory."[4] This is the meaning and the use of all that goes before. If we are in the school of Christ, shut up to him as teacher, it is that we may learn how to come into this perfect life. If we are enlisted in the cause of Christ, and called

[1] 1 Cor. 8: 13. [2] Gal. 2: 20. [3] Gal. 4: 19. [4] Col. 1: 27.

to do battle for him, it is that we may work that knowledge into soul-fiber in the conflict. No Christianity is complete until it issues in likeness to Christ. Then is a man a Christian in reality.

IV

SAINTS

"All the saints in Christ Jesus."—PAUL.

THE name, or title, "saint" is of common occurrence in the New Testament. While the term "Christian" occurs but three times, this, and allied terms, occur many times.

The terms "sanctify," "sanctified," "sanctification," "saint," "sanctuary," are of kindred meaning. "Sanctify" describes the action; "sanctified," the completed act, or the result; "saint," the person; "sanctuary," the place; "sanctification," the condition or state.

To sanctify means to set apart, to separate, with especial reference to God and his service. Moses sanctified Aaron that he might minister unto God in the priest's office; set him apart to that special work. He sanctified Aaron's

garments also, and his sons and his sons' garments.[1] The Tabernacle, and all that was therein, were sanctified, set apart to one great use, a place for the worship of God. It became thus the sanctuary,[2] while Aaron is called "the saint of Jehovah."[3]

In the New Testament the use of the term "saint" is found mostly in the writings of Paul and John, although Luke uses it in Acts, and it is used in the Epistle of Jude and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Paul addresses many of his Epistles to "the saints." They are at Rome and Corinth and Ephesus and Philippi and Colossæ. And they are in his mind as he writes to the church in Thessalonica, and to his son Timothy. John's use of the word is found entirely in the Apocalypse. The kindred terms, as applied to persons and things, are used by almost all of the New Testament writers. The underlying thought is thus evidently an inseparable part of Christian teaching.

[1] Lev. 8: 30. [2] Lev. 8: 10; Ex. 25: 8, 9. [3] Ps. 106: 16.

The name "saint" has the misfortune either to be unused, or misused, in modern religious practice. Most Christians do not use it at all in the New Testament sense. It is not a common designation of modern followers of Christ.

There are two uses of the term, in modern practice, which are unscriptural:

1. The ritualistic use. In this use of the term, a saint is one who has been canonized by the Church. By some fiat, or ceremony, perhaps long after the person has died, he is raised to sainthood, decreed worthy of reverence, even of worship. So, we have a list, or "calendar," of "saints." They have been selected from the great mass of believers, not always for their singular purity or nobility, it must be said; sometimes, because of some exploit which worked to the advantage of the Church, though questionable enough in itself; sometimes for other reasons not more worthy. One here, another there, over the earth, and across the centuries; a considerable host

in themselves, but a mere handful as compared with the whole multitude of those whom Christ has called. And, to do these favored ones honor, we have "saints' days," and feast-days, named for them. And churches and schools and monasteries and hospitals are given their names, and used as monuments to their memory.

2. The denominational use. A new movement starts in religious thought. The adherents of it wish to distinguish themselves from other Christians. They call themselves "saints," either with, or without, a qualifying phrase appended. The name thus becomes a distinctive name, a sectarian badge, a sort of fence delimiting the scope of the movement.

Neither of these is the sense in which the term is used in the word of God. Both of them are mischievous departures, which pervert this most beautiful and significant word, and which, by their reactions, drive the multitude of Christians from the comforting and edifying use of it which the Holy Spirit teaches.

The New Testament significance of the term is apparent. There is deep and splendid meaning in it.

SEPARATION. 1. Separation from the world. The Christian is a "called out" man. His case is illustrated in Israel coming out of Egypt. It was a severe wrench that broke Israel loose from the land of his bondage. But he came out. He was separated from Egypt. Separated by the blood on the door, shutting Egypt out from him, shutting him in with God; by the going "out," under Moses' lead; by the rolling sea when it had returned to its strength. The whole process of deliverance, from the first message of Moses to the nation of slaves, on to the moment when the song of triumph rose from the lips of a free people, was a sanctification, a separation, of Israel.

So the Christian has heard the call of Christ. It may be hard for him to let go of the world. But Christ lays hold on him with the power of heaven and breaks him loose. He turns away

from his old life, under the lead of Christ. He breaks his relations with it. He goes out from it. He passes to the shores of freedom in Christ. He is still in the world, but not of it. He has come into the place of separation. He dwells apart.

Constant emphasis is laid upon this separation of the Christian from the world, in the New Testament. It is everywhere assumed that his break with the world is complete and irrevocable. He must not think of going back—can not, indeed, even for a moment, without peril. He must not think of bringing forward the old life into the new. The divorce must be complete and final. The old man must be put off with his doings.[1] There must be no conforming to this age; no fashioning one's self after the former lusts.[2] The works of darkness must be cast off.[3] There must be no provision made for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.[4] The Christian is dead to

[1] Col. 3: 9. [2] Rom. 12: 2; 1 Pet. 1: 14. [3] Rom. 13: 12. [4] Rom. 13: 14.

sin, dead to the old life.[1] He is crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto him.[2]

It is a vast change. But it is a real one. It is as though the world, once everything to him, had become nothing. For him, "old things are passed away."[3]

So his separation is, first of all, a separation from the world. But it is more than this. It is (2) separation to Christ. It involves not only divorce, but union. Those who hear the call of Christ, and come out from the world, "turn to the Lord."[4] It is not simply a change of location that takes place in sanctification. The "saint" has changed masters. He has entered into a new relationship, a new fellowship.

This, also, is emphasized in the act of turning. When Israel went down into the sea on the way from Egypt, it was a transition. Israel was "baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea."[5] Thenceforth, Moses was their lawgiver,

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[1] Rom. 6: 2. [2] Gal. 6: 14. [3] 2 Cor. 5: 17. [4] 1 Thess. 1: 9, 10. [5] 1 Cor. 10: 1, 2.

leader, ruler. He stood to them as Jehovah. The baptism in the sea committed them to him irrevocably. They could not go back into Egypt. They were separated unto Moses, under God.

A like significant transition comes to men in turning from the world to Christ. As the Israelites were baptized unto Moses, so the Christian is said to be baptized into Christ.[1] In Christian baptism there is a renunciation of the world, and a commitment of the life to Christ.[2] No longer is life to be self-centered or self-determined. Henceforth Christ is King and Counselor, and life is to be determined by him.

And right gloriously is it determined by him.

First of all, he gives us an adequate motive power. The Holy Spirit is the gift of Christ to the Christian. The whole process of breaking away from the world, of coming into Christ, and of being endowed with this motive power for the new life, is concisely stated in the

[1] Rom. 6: 3. [2] Col. 2: 11-13.

first gospel sermon, where we would expect to find it: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."[1] That gift guarantees to the Christian a sufficient power for the high task to which he has been called.

The Holy Spirit is, first of all, the safeguard against the encroaches of the old nature. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death.[2] Our life is newly placed. While still in the body, we are not in the "flesh," but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in us.[3] It is a familiar thought: Christ in us—we in Christ; the Holy Spirit in us—we in the Holy Spirit. That ensures the victory over the old life. The flesh can not come back while we live in that union. "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."[4] The victory is complete.

But the Spirit is more than the

[1] Acts 2: 38. [2] Rom. 8: 2. [3] Rom. 8: 9. [4] Gal. 5: 16.

barrier against the old life. He is also the fountain of the new. He guards us; but he also enables us. Through him life is transformed and the impossible becomes the real. How varied, and how suggestive, the figures by which the Spirit's ministry is set forth. He is a tree, rooting in our hearts, sending forth his branches, bearing fruit. And such fruit! "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control;" things against which "there is no law."[1] He is a Guide, and, pilgrims that we are in an unfriendly world, we "walk after the Spirit," and are safe.[2] He is an Intercessor. And when we know not how to pray as we ought, "the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[3] He is a Witness, assuring us of our standing with God, and keeping before our vision the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and unfading, which wins us from the corrupt and perishing baubles of the

[1] Gal. 5: 22. [2] Rom. 8: 4-11. [3] Rom. 8: 26.

world.[1] He is the Sanctifier, making good what he has already begun.[2] He is the Strengthener, enabling us to take deep root, and to "be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled unto all the fulness of God."[3]

With this motive power, the "saint" is expected to make progress in the new life. The obligation for this growth into the new is no less emphasized in the New Testament than the divorce from the old. The Christian is to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.[4] He is to be transformed by the renewing of his mind.[5] He is to put on the armor of light.[6] He is to walk in the Spirit.[7] He is to put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.[8] He is to put on the whole armor of God, that he may be able to stand.[9] He is to add all diligence, and

[1] Rom. 8: 16, 17. [2] 2 Thess. 2: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 2. [3] Eph. 3: 16-19. [4] Rom. 13: 14. [5] Rom. 12: 2. [6] Rom. 13: 12. [7] Gal. 5: 16. [8] Eph. 4: 24. [9] Eph. 6: 11-17.

supply virtue and knowledge and self-control and patience and godliness and brotherly kindness and love, until these things abound in his life, and make him not idle or unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, making his calling and election sure and his fall from the new way impossible, and ensuring him an abundant entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.[1]

Such is the New Testament saint. Such are all true Christians. The New Testament makes no distinction. It knows no "calendar" of saints, selecting one here and another there, and excluding the great mass of believers. It knows no sect of "saints," shut off from other believers by peculiar doctrines and practices. Those who are Christians are saints—all of them. The one term is coextensive with the other. They all have been separated from the world. They all have been set apart to Christ. They all have received the Holy Spirit.

[1] 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.

Sainthood is the normal status of the Christian. The name, or title, "saint" involves an experience which is common to all, and signifies a state into which all have come.

Some important considerations deserve mention in connection with the New Testament signification of this name.

1. Saint-making is a divine prerogative. No man can make a saint. No conclave of men can make a saint, no matter by what imposing name they may call themselves. All that any man can do toward making saints is, as did Peter and John and Paul, to herald God's message to men to come out from the world and to come to Christ. The power that breaks men loose, that pries them out of the old life, that starts them along the way out from the world, that separates them from their sins and joins them to Christ, is divine power. We may call it the power of the Holy Spirit who reveals God; or the power of the word of God which the Spirit reveals—the

gospel, which Paul calls "the power of God unto salvation" to all who believe;[1] it is all the same. It is not the power of man, but the power of God, which separates men—makes them saints.

Thus it is everywhere set forth in the Word. Jesus prays that his Father may sanctify his disciples in the truth.[2] Paul says that he was appointed a minister of Jesus Christ unto the nations, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.[3] He says to the Corinthians that they were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.[4] He says of the Thessalonian Christians that God chose them from the beginning in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.[5] Peter calls the Christians to whom he writes "elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and

[1] Rom. 1:16. [2] John 17:17. [3] Rom. 15:16. [4] 1 Cor. 6:11. [5] 2 Thess. 2:13.

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."[1] Paul prays for the Thessalonians, that God may sanctify them wholly; that spirit, soul and body may be preserved entire, without blame, at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.[2] He says of the Corinthians that they are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.[3] He tells the Ephesians that Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blemish.[4] The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that Christ, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate; and that Christ who sanctifieth and his people who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.[5]

Thus, everywhere, we are reminded

[1] 1 Pet. 1: 1, 2. [2] 1 Thess. 5: 23. [3] 1 Cor. 1: 1. [4] Eph. 5: 25-27. [5] Heb. 2: 11; 13: 12.

that sainthood is a divine gift, status accomplished by God for man, when man hears the call and turns from the world to Christ. He who has not been made a saint thus can not be made a saint by fiat of man. He who has been made a saint thus is a saint despite what men may say to the contrary. The pretensions of men that they can determine who shall be saints are empty boasts, and their processes are crude impostures, by whomsoever put forth.

2. Saints can be made out of very common stuff. It is not necessary for a man to have fought a battle, or builded a cathedral, or gone on a pilgrimage, to become a saint. It is not even necessary for him to be rich or learned or powerful. Paul wrote to "them that are sanctified, called to be saints," at Corinth. He says of them that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called; but that the foolish and weak and base and despised things were chosen. They had not even been good. Some of them had been unspeakably bad.

We speak with bated breath the terms by which he describes their past lives. But he says: "Ye were washed, ye were sanctified, ye were justified, in the name of Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."[1]

What is necessary to sainthood is first of all a broken spirit and a contrite heart; a feeling of our need; a recognition of our lost condition; and a belief in Jesus Christ as Redeemer. Any man can be made a saint who will give up the world and turn to the Lord.

[1] 1 Cor. 6: 9-11.

V

CHILDREN

"Now are we children of God."—JOHN.

THE name "children" brings the Christian relationship down to where we all live. We have, all of us, been somebody's children. Many of us have children of our own. All of us have opportunities of observing the close ties and warm affection which bind children to parents, and parents to children. God may have seemed distant to us. But when we come to know ourselves as his children, and can look up and call him "our Father," the distance is bridged, the strangeness is gone, and we feel at home with him.

What a difference that makes in life! We all know how good the home feeling is. We go into other people's houses and enjoy our visit. Our friends make

it pleasant for us, and we are sure of their good will and esteem. But it is not home. We come back where father and mother are, and we have a feeling we get nowhere else. We know they love us. We know we are welcome to remain. Here we rest. Our hearts are content.

There are several blessed things suggested by this name, as applied to Christ's followers:

I. Sonship with God is a Fact. We *are* children of God. It is a reality. New Testament writers are addressing Christians. They are disciples of Jesus. They are friends of Jesus. They are saints, separated entirely to him. But they are more than that. Paul says: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God."[1] John says: "Now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be."[2] These people have come into the closest, most tender, most vital relationship to God. He is their

[1] Rom. 8: 16. [2] 1 John 3: 2.

Father. They are his sons and daughters. They belong to his family.

The fact of importance here is this, that this is a possible relation for men, possible for all men who are willing to enter it. What a marvel is here! That the great God is willing to take any man to be his son; to make the poorest a member of his family, and his heir; to give to the vilest and the most hopeless, a home with him.

II. Sonship with God is a Matter of Evidence. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit. Here is the best evidence possible. Under the law, a thing attested by two or three witnesses was established. Here are two witnesses. They are both, competent, and reliable. Their testimony can not be impeached. They bear joint testimony to the establishment of one thing—that we are children of God.

This is the only kind of witness possible in this case. There are just two principal parties to this relationship God and the individual; Father and child.

There are only two spirits that can speak here. "The things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God." So the Spirit of God must bear witness on God's part, or it can never be known whether he has received us as his children or not.

But "who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him"?[1] No one but yourself knows whether you have given yourself to God or not. Becoming a child of God is not alone a matter of outward form, as joining a lodge, or enlisting in an army, which can be attested by others who may have witnessed our obedience to the form prescribed. This is a matter of the heart—of the spirit; and whatever outward form there may be connected with it is but an expression of the deep and vital change within. If it is not that, it is worthless. A mere outward form can affect nothing here. Now, your spirit alone knows whether you have given yourself to God. It must be a witness to

[1] 1 Cor. 2: 11.

the fact. The relationship must be established by the joint testimony; can be established in no other way.

But it can be established in this way. When God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit, the thing is assured. The world may question it. The Devil may deny it. It stands incontrovertible.

But how is this witness of God's Spirit with our spirit borne?

The simplest way to bear witness, and the surest, is in words. There may be other ways. But this is one way, and a way by which men may be amply assured. The Spirit of God is a speaking Spirit. And he speaks on this matter of sonship with God.

First of all, the Spirit assures us that sonship is possible. He says that He who was with God, and who was God, came down to earth. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

It was a cold welcome. But he was

not repulsed. In spite of it all, he gave men "the right to become children of God."[1]

So much is clear; the right to become children of God is assured.

But just in this connection the Spirit reveals a great condition of sonship. "As many as received him." It was to them he gave the right. And how did they receive him? "Even to them that believe on his name."

Here is where the joint testimony becomes possible. The Spirit of God is bearing witness on this matter of sonship. It is, after all, a voluntary matter on man's part. "Receiving" and "believing" are voluntary acts. It could not be otherwise. God could not make an unwilling man a son.

What do our spirits witness here? Have we received Christ? Have we believed on his name? Receiving Christ is not something that can be done for us. It is a personal act. Believing on Christ is not something we can do without being

[1] John 1: 10-12.

conscious of it. Our spirit knows if we have done this. Does our spirit bear witness of it? Does the witness of our spirit agree with the witness of the Spirit of God?

But the Spirit of God goes further. He bears witness that this becoming children of God is by a birth, a birth from above. "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Ye must be born anew."[1]

Why should it not be so? Is there any other way to become children except by being born?

"Born from above" involves the thought of God as our Father. So the Spirit says of those who receive Jesus, and are thus given the right to become children of God, that they are "begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."[2]

The great agent in this new birth is the Spirit of God. To be born anew is to be born of water and THE SPIRIT.[3]

In every birth, there is first the

[1] John 3: 3-7. [2] John 1: 13. [3] John 3: 5.

impartation of life. In the new birth, the life of God is imparted. How could we become God's children otherwise?

This life of God is brought to men by the Spirit of God in the Word. Jesus says the Word is the seed.[1] The Spirit says we are begotten again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God which liveth and abideth."[2] And again: "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth."[3] And again: "In Jesus Christ I begat you through the gospel."[4]

A seed is a channel through which life comes over from one time, or place, to another. The word of God is the channel through which the life of God comes over to men. Hence the spiritual status of men depends on what they do with the Word. If they allow the Devil to take it away out of their hearts, there is no fruit. If they deny it depth of soil, it withers. If they allow the pleasures of life and the deceitfulness of

[1] Luke 8: 11. [2] 1 Pet. 1: 23. [3] Jas. 1: 18. [4] 1 Cor. 4: 15.

riches to choke it, it brings no fruit to perfection. If they receive it into good and honest hearts, it multiplies itself, and life is redeemed. The parable of the sower enforces this thought—that in the word which the Spirit of God speaks, God's life comes to us. If we receive the Word, we receive the life and are begotten again; we are on the way to sonship; we have received the right to become children of God.[1]

This fact seems all the more wonderful, but also all the more possible, when we realize what the Word is. The Spirit helps us here. He tells us that the Word was in the beginning; that the Word was with God; that the Word was God.[2] We can not separate the Word from God, nor God from the Word, in our thought. All that the Word does, God does. All that God does, he does by the Word, the creative energy that made the worlds takes shape in the Word. This Word, that "liveth and abideth," is the agency of God in imparting his life to men. We

[1] Matt. 13: 1-9, 18-23. [2] John 1: 1.

may surely look for great effects from such a cause.

The matter grows in its sublimity as the Spirit goes on to tell us that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.[1] The Word is embodied in Jesus. Jesus is the Word. They who receive Jesus, who believe on his name, receive the Word. Receiving the Word, they receive God. God's life is in them. They have the right to become his children.

What saith our spirit to all this? Have we received the Word into good and honest hearts? Or are we conscious that when God has spoken we have shut our ears, and refused to hear? If we have done the latter, let us not claim to be children of God. Our spirit must agree with the witness of God's Spirit, or our sonship can not be established.

But there is more in birth than the impartation of life. There is also the transition of life. Life must come forth.

In becoming children of God there is an act of transition, where the new

[1] John 1: 14.

life becomes manifest and the child comes into the family. That is what is signified by the water, in the new birth.

Christ has commanded baptism to the believer. He says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."[1] He has ordained baptism as a transitional act. It is the point where the new life manifests itself; where he who is endowed with the life of God comes into the family. Baptism is nothing in itself. It could mean nothing to an individual who had not been begotten by the life of God. It is of significance only to the individual who has received Christ by faith. But to such an one, it is significant. It is his transition into the privileges and activities of the family of God, where the new life can develop in the likeness of Him who gave it.

So the Spirit of God witnesses that baptism is a veritable birth out of water: "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him."[2] Also, that it brings us into the

[1] Mark 16: 16. [2] Col. 2: 12.

new relation for which faith in Jesus Christ has fitted us. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ."[1]

Here, again, our spirit may bear witness to our experience. Baptism is a conscious act, a personal act. It is not something that one can do for another, or have done for another. It is a command to be obeyed. It involves a conscious act of the will.

What does our spirit testify? Have we obeyed Jesus Christ in this ordinance?

It will not do for us to say we do not think it necessary. The Spirit of God is bearing witness. He can not bear witness with our spirit to the fact of our sonship, if our spirit can not witness to our obedience. Our reception of Jesus Christ the Word, by faith, is but preparatory to our transition into him. If we have been begotten, we must use our right to be born. If Christ, who is the life, is in us by faith, we must be in him by obedience.

[1] Gal. 3: 26, 27.

It is not enough for us to have received life. We must come forth.

III. Sonship with God Brings Momentous Results. 1. A new nature. Born anew. So, the Spirit witnesses: "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ."[1]

Here is a good test for us. It may be that our reception of Christ has not been as hearty as it should have been; that even our "obedience" to Christ has not been an entire surrender of ourselves to him. Let us apply this test. What does our spirit say? Have the "old things" passed away? The old love of the world and its follies; the old temper; the old lusts; the old habits? We must not wear our old clothes in the new home, nor presume to keep up our old associations in the new family relationship.

Has life become new with us? God's life in us ought to burgeon out in bloom

[1] 2 Cor. 5: 17, 18.

and fruit, transforming us completely. Yea, it will do so, if we have received it heartily and yield ourselves to it entirely.

There are certain ways by which we may satisfy ourselves on this point. The Spirit says: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God."[1] Are we peacemakers? Or strife-makers? The Spirit says: "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death."[2] What does our spirit say here? Let us put ourselves to the test.

2. Heirship. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."[3] No language can describe all that this means.

But, first of all, this is good for the present time. We miss much if we put this entirely in the future. An heir has a present inheritance. The child has his father's presence, his companionship, his

[1] Matt. 5: 9. [2] 1 John 3: 14. [3] Rom. 8: 17.

counsel, his protection, his bounty, his home. If we are God's children, we have God now. God's truth, God's favor, God's power, God's wondrous riches of life, God's home, are ours to enjoy in the present. The Psalmist says: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Present blessing! And he is sure it will continue. "Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."[1] Why should we live a lean, impoverished, lonely life, when the great God is our Father, and we can be at home with him?

But, secondly, it ensures the future. There can be no fear, no misgiving, to the child of God who walks by faith. For "we are begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," which is "reserved in heaven

[1] Ps. 23: 5, 6.

for those who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."[1] That is the blessed witness of the Spirit of God. To all the faithful heirs of God it makes the future secure.

[1] 1 Pet. 1: 3-5.

VI

BRETHREN

"And all ye are brethren."—JESUS.
"Loving as brethren."—PETER.

THE name "brethren" is used with notable frequency by New Testament writers. It is applied to the followers of Jesus in thirty instances in the Book of Acts. Paul uses it copiously. It appears in nearly all his Epistles, in some of them with great frequency. James and Peter and John, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, all use it with more or less freedom. It is one of the most largely used names of Christ's people.

The use of this name emphasizes the democracy of the Christian estate. It is a reminder of at least two things of great significance:

I. THE EQUALITY OF CHRISTIANS. Jesus says: "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are

brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."[1]

Christians are sons of God. Involved in sonship is brotherhood. There is one God, and he is our Father. There is one family, and all God's children are in that family. All are equal in their relationship to the Father, and in their status as members of his family.

This is the meaning of those prohibitions: "Be not called Rabbi, masters," etc.; "Call no man your father on earth." These restrictions relate, of course, to spiritual things. Here equality is to prevail.

The Christian is on a new plane in this regard. Under the Jewish dispensation there were ranks and orders and classes: priests, Levites, and the people. Out in the world, men strive after dominion, after honor and glory from

[1] Matt. 23: 8-11.

their fellow-men; and there are classes and ranks and offices, which separate men, and distinguish them, and maintain inequalities among them. Here it is not to be so. Before God, and in relation to God's favor and blessing, one is not greater than another. And in the Christian relationship one is not to be, or to aspire to be, greater than another save, it may be, in service.

Christians have one Teacher. They may have many "teachers." But they have one TEACHER; not a man—not one of themselves, to be honored and revered above his brethren, but Christ. And they are all alike disciples of Christ—in his school. They have one Father; not a man, to be feared and obeyed and pleased, thus setting him off from the mass of his brethren as being holier or more mighty than they. But, God, the Father in heaven, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all his followers, whose life has been given us in the new birth, to whose family we all belong.

They have one Master; not any man

who has been set over them to command or to punish. But Christ, the Lord, to whom God has given all authority in heaven and on earth, and to whom all alike are responsible. So, the equality of the children in the family is guarded and maintained.

One can not but note the contrast between this ideal of Jesus for his people, and that which is embodied in the systems which men invent and perpetuate. The "religions" of the world are largely priestly religions. This is true of what we term the pagan faiths. They separate men into classes, priestly and lay. The priestly classes are ranked in hierarchies with ascending scales of dignity. They are not democracies—but imperialisms.

There are systems claiming the Christian name which notoriously embody this principle. Even the newer cults, which in this day are springing up so rapidly, almost all propose some earthly head—some supposed superior person to whom all others are to pay deference; with more or less of the hierarchical in the

relations of the members to each other, and to the head. There grows out of this, distinctions among the people, and inequalities of privilege and power.

How foreign all this is to the spirit and ideal of Jesus, is at once apparent. The Christian community is a family. There are no slaves here, no masters, no favorites. There is no one who has a right to lord it over others. All are alike under the Father's love and care. All are under the authority of the Elder Brother. All have equal access to the Father, through Jesus Christ, who is the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession."[1] All are equally priests of God, under him.[2] No man has any power or right to stand between his brother and the throne, either to secure him or to deny him any blessing. All spiritual privilege and blessing is in the power of the Head of the family. Every member has, in his own proper person, free access to it, through the new and living way that has been opened up.[3]

[1] Heb. 3: 1. [2] 1 Pet. 2: 9; Rev. 1: 6. [3] Heb. 10: 19-23.

What a clumsy anachronism are all priesthoods and priestly systems! What a monstrous usurpation, for any man to place himself between his brethren in Christ and the throne of God, as the channel through which the divine favor must be sought. What a recurrence to outgrown things, and discredited things, for any class of men to pose as the indispensable dispensers of God's blessings. What a blindness to the realities of the redemption which Christ has wrought, for his people to hand over to a pretentious class the high prerogatives and priceless privileges which Christ has made free to all. "All ye are brethren." That is the charter of liberties to the Christian community. It is the sentence of doom upon every priestly claimant and system.

Nothing is more vital to Christian welfare than the preservation of this Christian democracy under Christ. The hierarchical spirit is intrusive and persistent. The beautiful simplicity of the early Christian relationship was soon lost

in the impertinent encroachments of the priestly ambition. All that Jesus forbade in that memorable prohibition quoted, came into practice among those who still professed to be following him. And from that day until the present, on a wide scale, the name of Christ has been called upon systems in which Christians have been compelled to call their brethren "Rabbi," and "Father," and "Master," and where those who would be greatest have had, also, as their ambition, to be served rather than to serve. Many and notable have been the protests against this violation of the Christian compact; and worthy have been the successes in breaking the impious yoke and coming back into the liberty with which Jesus Christ has set his people free. But it is an instructive fact that within every such movement there springs up speedily the old lie, that some are to be above others in the Christian relationship. And that peril must be vigilantly guarded against, or those who have been made freemen in Christ will be

again entangled in a yoke of bondage.[1]

II. FRATERNITY. Brotherhood lived! It is not easily achieved. The old life is a life of rivalry. Sin casts men into cross-purposes with one another. The spirit of brotherhood is killed. Individualism runs riot. "Enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings," are among the works of the flesh.[2] Paul recalled his old life, and its bitter antagonisms: "For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasing ourselves, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."[3]

This spirit gets into all phases of life. Business becomes a selfish competition—an economic war. Politics is an ambitious rivalry. "Society" is a herd-egotism.

The child of God is in the midst of all these tendencies to social disintegration. He has been reared in the midst of them, has been moulded by them, and is inevitably involved in them in many

[1] Gal. 5: 1. [2] Gal. 5: 20. [3] Tit. 3: 3.

ways. It is a tremendous task to ignore them, to rise above them, to deny them. Christians find it hard to be rivals in business, and fellows in religion; to be antagonists in politics, and fellow-helpers in the Kingdom of God; to move in different social classes, and meet on terms of equality in the Christian circle. The competitive instinct dies hard. The class spirit is intrusive. The old egotism is constantly imperiling the new brotherhood.

But brotherhood must be lived. "All ye are brethren." How constantly and pointedly the Holy Spirit keeps the obligations of brotherhood before us. How direct and withering his blows at the selfish spirit. How illuminating and inspiring his directions and exhortations to altruism.

The motive and the process of this brotherly life are alike set forth. "In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another."[1] What an entire

[1] Rom. 12: 10.

reversal of the old procedure! And this love is not to be cold and apathetic, a mere conventionalism. It is to be a flame in which all unbrotherliness will be burned out and all brotherly ministry promoted. "Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves: for love covereth a multitude of sins; using hospitality one to another without murmuring; according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."[1]

The selfish and uncharitable judgments by which we rank our fellow-men in relation to ourselves, are all smitten by this new outlook. They are our equals, and we are all under God. "Why dost thou judge thy brother? Or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God."[2] Love allows only one judgment about our brother—this: "that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of

[1] 1 Pet. 4: 8-10. [2] Rom. 14: 10.

falling."[1] And, if perchance our brother fall, love sets before us one duty: "Ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted." The brother's heavy load is our load also, because he is our brother. There is only one thing for us to do about it: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."[2]

As has been said, this is not easy. We can scarcely say that, even as Christians, it "comes natural" to us. It is a life that must be cultivated. The "new man" is to be "put on." And it takes a good deal of "putting on," to get the life fitted to us so that we wear it naturally and easily. But it must be persisted in. There is no other way to realize brotherhood. And brotherhood must be realized. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any;

[1] Rom. 14: 13. [2] Gal. 6: 1, 2.

even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful." And how that spirit of brotherliness goes out in mutual ministry to the brethren; drawing from the great fountain of spiritual refreshment and bearing it to one another in vessels of service, as God has given to each. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." And all this is to be done with the thought ever present of the common relationship of all, to Christ as Lord, and to God as Father, the source of all blessing. "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."[1]

This is to be the common family life

[1] Col. 3: 12-17.

of Christians. Not a special class within the Christian community, is thus obligated. It is the family spirit, and is to be cultivated by every member. "Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing."[1]

What marvels this new spirit effects in human society! Had the world ever witnessed anything like what transpired soon after these new relationships began to be announced and established? See that "community of goods" which spontaneously took the place of individual ownership in the Jerusalem church. What did it signify? For one thing, this: that Jews of all ranks and classes, from priesthood to proletariat, from employer and proprietor to day laborer and pauper, were fused together in a brotherhood of the Spirit, where love, not blood, or racial interest, was the bond,

[1] 1 Pet. 3: 8, 9.

and where there was no longer "I," as against "thou," but all were one in Him whom their hearts had accepted as Lord. See that other phenomenon, more wonderful still, where Gentiles, out on the wide world-field, took thought of needy and suffering Jews in the little country of Judea, and gave joyfully and liberally of their substance to relieve their distress. Was there ever more noble giving than that described by Paul when he tells of the Macedonian Christians? How that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality? They gave according to their power, yea and beyond their power. They gave of their own accord. They besought Paul with much entreaty in regard to this offering, that he would take it and administer it for them.[1] And all this for people whom they had never seen, perhaps. Not only so—for people of a race that was despised by Gentiles. There has been no race hatred sharper,

[1] 2 Cor. 8: 1-4.

or contempt more withering, in history, than that which existed in many instances between those two races at that time.

What is the secret of this? One thing: they had given their own selves to the Lord, as disciples of Christ and children of the Father. And the logical sequence of that was that they should give themselves unto one another—"to us," Paul says, for this service to their brethren, "through the will of God."[1]

Here is an unparalleled thing. Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, in one fellowship, loving one another, brothers! There was no hate nor scorn too strong in the old life. Here there is "one spirit"; they love as brethren.

This fact, accomplished in that early day, made possible and pertinent such unprecedented announcements as that there was no longer Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but that Christ is all, and in all, and all are one in him.[2] It made fitting such utter-

[1] 2 Cor. 8: 5. [2] Col. 3: 11.

ances as the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and the first Epistle of John.

And this fact, possible in any age, is the hope of the world. Hatred and injustice, oppression and warfare, race prejudice and class pride, will pass away, and peace and good will prevail only in the degree in which men become children of God and come into the spirit of brotherhood in Christ. There is no peace-pact, save this, that will stand against the selfish instincts of men.

VII

SERVANTS

"As servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."—PAUL.

THE name "servant," in the New Testament, has, in the majority of instances, the meaning, "bondservant," "slave."

At first thought, this name might suggest a tremendous descent from the high significance of the names we have been considering. After dwelling in the uplands of Christian relationship, where the flowers and fruits of high privilege with God are abundant and satisfying, we recoil from this plunge into the shadows, with its reminder of chains, and loss of freedom, and soulless drudgery.

And does not this feeling of resentment seem strengthened by much New Testament teaching? Jesus says: "No longer do I call you servants; for the

servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you."[1] Indeed, he had already said that the very purpose and effect of discipleship was to make men free.[2] The apostle Paul is constantly emphasizing the freedom of the Christian. It is the very purpose of Christ's redemption, and must be sacredly guarded and maintained.[3]

How is it, then, that this name is repeatedly applied to Christ's followers, in the New Testament? Jesus himself uses it, in the very conversation in which he seems to abolish it, as quoted above.[4] Paul continually calls himself the servant —slave—of Christ, and associates others with him in that designation.[5] The term is used by James and Peter and Jude and John. It occurs more frequently in the Book of Revelation than in any other book of the New Testament, as applied to the followers of Christ. It is applied

[1] John 15: 15. [2] John 8: 32. [3] Gal. 5: 1. [4] John 15: 20f. [5] Rom. 1: 1; Phil. 1: 1; Tit. 1: 1.

to men in the present state. But it is used also of men in the future state. In the Jerusalem that is to come, the servants of the Lord will be still serving him.[1]

It is apparent that we must seek a new significance for this name as applied to Christians.

But, first of all, let not our hearts recoil from it. For we are in good company here. A host of worthies have gone before us who were also "servants." Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Joshua and Samuel; Job and Elijah and David and Nehemiah; Isaiah and all the prophets—they, all, are called "servants," in this same sense of bondage, and were glad to confess themselves as such. And one greater than they all is pointed out by Jehovah as "my servant whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth."[2]

There is a sense in which the Christian is free. Christ is a deliverer. He breaks all old chains of bondage, and

[1] Rev. 22: 3. [2] Isa. 42: 1.

brings men into the liberty of the children of God.

This freedom is a freedom from sin. Sin is a tyrant, and he who commits sin is his bondservant.[1] It is a galling and shameful slavery. We have little cause to be ashamed of any slavery, after having submitted to that. But Christ delivers us from that "power of darkness."[2] We are, through him, "made free from sin."[3] Sin no more reigns in our mortal body that we should obey the lusts thereof; neither must we any longer present our members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness.

This is also freedom from the law. Sinai in Arabia—"the Jerusalem which now is"—is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother.[4] The law was a yoke that men were not able to bear.[5] Christ delivers men from it.[6] The whole seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a striking exposition of this

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[1] John 8: 34. [2] Col. 1: 13. [3] Rom. 6: 12, 13, 18. [4] Gal. 4: 25, 26. [5] Acts 15: 10. [6] Rom. 7: 6.

bondage to sin and to the law, and this deliverance through Christ. It is epitomized in this pregnant statement: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death."[1]

This deliverance is revolutionary. Like a prisoner out of the dungeon, the soul comes forth. Like an uncaged bird it mounts, free from its old detention, and joyful in its freedom.

This is the standpoint from which to view the new slavery. The liberated man is free. But he belongs to Him who freed him. "And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price."[2] And what a price! Not corruptible things, as silver and gold. But with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot—the blood of Christ.[3] Shall He who has given his own life for us make no requirement of us? Has He redeemed us at such a cost, to lie idle, or rove at will? Nay! He has higher aims for us than that. Christ gave him-

[1] Rom. 8: 2. [2] 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20. [3] 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.

self for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, *zealous of good works.*[1]

Here is the new significance of the name "servant." The Christian has changed masters. He is now the possession of Christ. That fact alone transfigures the name. But when to this is added the task his Master sets before him, the glory is enhanced. Good works. That aligns him with his Master, "who went about doing good."[2] That proclaims him as of Him who is good and doeth good;[3] "for he that doeth good is of God."[4]

No shame is there in this new meaning of the name. On the contrary, it is a title of honor; we may say, of honor supreme.

For, after all, this new slavery is real freedom.

Christ's possession of us means our righteousness. The life of righteousness in Jesus Christ is the life of liberty. It

[1] Tit. 2: 14. [2] Acts 10: 38. [3] Ps. 119: 68. [4] 3 John 11.

is a wonderful paradox that the more thorough is our surrender to him, the more he makes us masters of ourselves. We find the apparent contradiction a real harmony, that when we lose our lives in him, we save them.[1] We discover that, for the first time in our lives, as Christ's bondslaves, we can do as we please with perfect impunity; that there is no law hindering us with its restrictions or threatening us with its penalties, along the road which it is our delight to travel.[2] Our life is as the sweep of the planets in their orbits, without friction, without weariness, propelled, and held in leash, by the will of Christ our Master.

This, too, is the highest glory. It is not necessarily a degradation to be used by another. It all depends on what we are used for. The metal used by the electric current, carrying messages of weight and purpose, is honored in that service. The rails which bear the traffic of a continent are not thereby dishonored, but given a new dignity. The filthy

[1] Matt. 16: 25. [2] Gal. 5: 23.

rags, made into paper, receiving print, made to carry the news hither and thither, are thereby immeasurably ennobled.

It is the supreme glory of human lives to be made carriers of God. When light shines out of darkness and comes into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, it is no small honor to be the carbon-point to flash it out upon mankind. When our souls have been refreshed by the river of life, it is a high dignity that comes to us, earthen vessels that we are, to carry its waters to the thirsty. Were we great in ourselves, we might obscure the glory of God in this ministry to men's needs. But, being nothing but slaves of Jesus Christ, the exceeding greatness of the power is seen to be of God, and we have our highest glory in proclaiming his. The tree is nothing, of itself. With its roots, its trunk, its branches, it is but a channel through which the life forms itself and effects its purposes. Its glory is in serv-

ing. Were it to divorce itself from the life which dominates it, it would be but an unsightly stump. But, filled with the life, putting out roots and leaves and blossoms, in obedience to the life—living only to serve—it is a noble thing, pleasing and useful and beneficent.

So, service, for the Christian, is the highway to honor and usefulness and power. There is no true glory apart from it. There is all glory for us here.

We can begin to understand, thus, the reason for the continued use of this name. New Testament writers appreciated what it meant for life to be completely dominated by the will of Christ. It was something, not to be shunned, but to be coveted. The "servant," in this high sense, is not inferior to the "disciple," the "friend," the "Christian," the "saint," the "son," the "brother." Nay! He is, yet, all these, his relationship under all these names preserved intact. Not only so. What these names, one and all, signify, receives additional honor and crowning glory, in this. Service for

Jesus Christ is the climax of privilege for his followers.

This doubtless accounts for that vision of service which we are permitted to see, in the other world. It is significant that, in the vision of the New Jerusalem, but two of the names we have been considering appear—"son" and "servant." Of these, the latter receives the more prominence. The significance of the others has been very largely merged in this. The disciple of Jesus has learned his lesson and now knows as he is known. The friend of Jesus has been joined with him in eternal union. The Christian has kept the faith, fought the good fight, finished his course. The saint is among the holy ones about the throne, forever freed from the corruption that is in the world. The children have come home to the Father's house. The brethren find their ultimate fellowship in the home from which they shall never go out.

But all are still servants of the King. And they are fitted for service as never before. In the body, the life of Christ

within us is hampered and restricted by the weakness of the flesh. But when Christ shall have endowed his servants with new bodies, like unto the body of his glory,[1] these will be perfect instruments for his Spirit. And in the service to which Christ will put us in that new sphere, the full significance of redemption will be seen.

[1] Phil. 3: 20, 21.

VIII

CHURCH

"I will build my church."—Jesus.

COLLECTIVELY, the followers of Christ are designated in the New Testament as the church. The word occurs first in that memorable conversation of Jesus with his disciples recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew; and it is used again by the Master in a later conversation.[1] In both these instances, it is used in an anticipative way. The church was not at this time in existence —save in the purpose of Jesus. Which fact has a value in determining the meaning of the church. It is not simply a number of disciples of Jesus, attached to him in a personal interest. This was already true—in the group he had gathered, and to whom he made his announcement.

[1] Matt. 18: 17.

The primary meaning of the word is "that which is called out." But the term, as Jesus uses it, in anticipation of his work in the world, and as it is used later of the accomplished fact, evidently involves more than the mere fact of being called forth. It is not simply a separation from the world that is involved, as ore is separated from its native bed, or timber from the forest. The term involves the assembling and uniting of the materials in a definite relationship. Jesus says, "I will *build* it." There is the idea of construction, of fitting materials together, of creating out of their individualities a unity, so that the many become one. The church is not to be simply a crowd—a mass of detached individuals. Neither is it to be a mob, brought together and moved by a sudden and fitful impulse. There is an orderliness in this purpose of Jesus, a far-sighted, logical and stately process. He aims at a permanent result. The church is to be a stable thing, founded on a rock, indestructible. It is to be an organic

thing, with collective intelligence and power of initiative and action, capable of being addressed and appealed to, and of forming decisive judgments. The disciples who heard these announcements of Jesus were to be in the church when it should be formed. They were already "called out" to his service, and so were materials, ready at hand for the building. They were to live in anticipation of being built in when the purpose of Christ should move into action.

This is the significance of those wonderful promises of Jesus recorded in several chapters of the Gospel of John. The term "church" does not recur in the Gospels. But the thing is in the mind of the Master, and the meaning of it, as well as the means to it, is made clear to the disciples.

The promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples was the guarantee that the church would be built. They were naturally despondent when Jesus announced his departure from them. His presence had been the bond that had bound them

together. They felt that, with his absence, they would fall apart like a rope of sand. The Holy Spirit would prevent that. He would do more. He would unite them in a vital, organic union with each other and with Christ. He was to be the builder of the church. And he would come without fail and abide without end. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." He was not to come to the world. The world could not receive him: "for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him." He comes to a prepared people—to a people "called out," as the disciples had been by the invitation of Christ; a people anticipating, and desirous of, a growing fellowship with God. "Ye know him; for he abideth with you and shall be in you." He is an expected guest, and enters to abide in hearts that are ready for him.

And this coming of the Spirit was to be in reality the return of the Master

to his disciples. Had he not said, "I will build my church"? The Holy Spirit is Christ in spirit—building his church. So he says: "I will not leave you orphans: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more: but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also." No wonder he had said: "Ye know him." Did they not know their own Master? And when he returns in this way, these people who had already been "called out," will be built together with him in a conscious unity. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."[1]

We come here to the real significance of the church. It is an organism in Christ, and in which Christ is; and in which there is the consciousness of this double relation. Not only so. There is the consciousness that this interrelation with Christ insures oneness with God. I am in the Father—ye in me—I in you. The union of the disciple with God through Jesus the Master is complete.

[1] John 14: 16-20.

The church is a conscious union of men with one another, in Christ and God.

The church therefore represents the climax of human privilege and power in spiritual things. This was what Jesus had in mind when he announced the church.

The next occurrence of the word is in the Acts, where it appears frequently. Paul uses it continuously. It occurs in every one of his Epistles excepting Second Timothy and Titus. Peter and Jude are the only New Testament writers who do not use it in their Epistles. It is used seventeen times in the Apocalypse.

In all these later instances the church is spoken of as an existing fact. What Jesus announced, has now come to pass. The second chapter of Acts is a meeting-place of promise and performance. We see in that record the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost resulted in the church as a fact in history. The Spirit came to the disciples of Jesus. It was their Master, back again in spirit, making

them conscious of his presence in them, of their union with him, and of their oneness with God. All the marvels of Pentecost are easy in the light of this. There was a new thing in the world, a high thing, the highest possible to men in the body; and new phenomena and accomplishment were to be expected. The transformation of the timid, confused disciples into courageous and convincing proclaimers; the conversion of a multitude of scoffers and antagonists to a cause as yet so despised and so apparently weak; the wonderful joy and love and unity of a great company of people, hitherto, perhaps, strangers to one another; all this was because the church had come—built by Christ in spirit. All his own wisdom and all the mighty power of God were flowing here through this human channel—a river of life to refresh the earth. We watch this channel, as it expands and carries this tide of heaven abroad in the world. We catch glimpses of it, in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, over in Damascus, in Antioch,

throughout Asia Minor, over in Macedonia and Greece, as far away as Rome. Men of all races, of all classes, are "called out," and are builded together into a throbbing organism, instinct with a common faith and purpose. And we realize that Jesus is doing the great work which he had announced he would do; he is building his church, on a progressive and world-embracing scale.

As we follow this process, we become conscious that the church has a twofold manifestation. We see it in its local aspect—the gathering out, and building together, of all who, in any certain community, hear the call, and receive the word, of Jesus as Lord. So, Jerusalem has a "church."[1] But, soon, Antioch also has a "church."[2] And, a little later, there are "churches" at various points on the heathen field, so that Paul and Silas ordained elders in "every church."[3] Such local "churches" multiplied, until the world was pretty thoroughly covered with them. They differed much, it can

[1] Acts 5: 11; 8: 1-3. [2] Acts 13: 1. [3] Acts 14: 23.

not be doubted, in the human elements that entered into them; Jews alone, as in Jerusalem and throughout Judea; Jews and Gentiles, as in Antioch; Gentiles almost wholly, as in the Galatian and Grecian churches. In some churches, many of the influential people of the community, as in Jerusalem, where a great company of the priests had become obedient to the faith.[1] In others, almost wholly the humbler classes, as in Corinth, where not many who were wise after the flesh, nor mighty, nor noble, were called.[2] These separated and differing groups of people would be differently affected by the different environment in which they found themselves, as well as by their various heritage of racial and religious characteristics. From the outward aspect, one might think they had not so much in common.

But we must be conscious of another aspect of the church. The church is a unit. The "churches" are but the church in its local manifestations. Underneath

[1] Acts 6:7. [2] 1 Cor. 1:26.

all the variety is unity. There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, in all.[1] Before this essential unity, all distinctions of race and class fade away. The "called out," of whatever station or people, are built into a single structure. Through his human ministers, Christ brings them together and unites them. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, are given: "Unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is the purpose of the great Builder that all his "called" ones may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the

[1] Eph. 4: 4-6.

body unto the building up of itself in love.[1] There can be no cleavage here. In an organism so thoroughly united in Christ, there can be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. All are one in Christ Jesus.[2]

We are not surprised, therefore, to find the name "church" applied to the whole community of believers as though they were all really and consciously united in one organism. Saul's ravages were against the "church,"[3] whether found in Jerusalem or in Damascus. When Saul was converted, "the church," throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, had peace, being edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.[4] Whether having its local habitation in Judean towns or Gentile capitals; whether its members were uncultured slaves or brainy disputants; whether the local assemblies numbered thousands, or were but the members of a single household—the "church" included

[1] Eph. 4: 11-16. [2] Gal. 3: 28. [3] Acts 8: 1-3. [4] Acts 9: 31.

all, in all places, who had come out from the world at the call of Christ and had submitted themselves unto him in the Spirit. All these were built on the one foundation, and into the one superstructure. All had come into the consciousness of oneness with Christ, and of unity with God through him. The church was the body, of which Jesus Christ was the head;[1] and in which, while every member had his own place and function, there could be, in the nature of the case, no schism.

In apostolic usage, the church is variously designated. Qualifying phrases, such as "of the Gentiles,"[2] "of the saints,"[3] "of the firstborn,"[4] indicate the class, or the character, of the people making up the churches spoken of. "Of Galatia,[5] Asia,[6] Thessalonica,[7] Ephesus,"[8] etc., and "In Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira," etc.,[9] are simply place qualifications, designating locality for the churches mentioned. Aside from these, there are

[1] Col. 1:18, 24. [2] Rom. 16:4. [3] 1 Cor. 14:33. [4] Heb. 12:23. [5] 1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2. [6] 1 Cor. 16:19. [7] 1 Thess. 1:1. [8] Rev. 2:1. [9] Rev. 2:8-18.

at least three designations, used and suggested, which demand consideration.

First—Church. In the great majority of instances in which the institution is spoken of, this term, either in the singular, or in the plural, is used without a qualifying phrase. The justification for this is evident. The church was a new thing in human society. It was unique. No organization among men, past or present, could be compared with it in character. Wherever it was manifested it carried its own distinction. It marked an obvious and radical cleavage in human society. Over against it was the unbelieving world, whether of Jew or of Gentile, with all the disabilities which unbelief entails. The church itself was a faith institution, with all the potencies of spiritual enrichment which faith ensures. The difference was immediately apparent.

The use of the unqualified term emphasized this essential distinction. It was a reminder to those in the church that they were out from the world and

that a new life was now possible, and obligatory because possible. It was a reminder to those yet in the world that there was no hope there; that if they would be saved from sin they must escape out of sin. The name, like the individual names of Christ's people, carried a vital significance. It was a proclamation of spiritual facts of tremendous import. It set forth the crowning fact in human history—that the power of heaven was at work among men, selecting and building them into a spiritual temple, the dwelling-place on earth of the Most High.

Second—Church of Christ. This term is not used in the New Testament in the singular. The plural form, "churches of Christ," occurs once.[1]

The idea, however, pervades the whole teaching about the church in the New Testament. Jesus says: "I will build my church."[2] The idea of authorship and of proprietorship is involved here.

[1] Rom. 16: 16. [2] Matt. 16: 18.

The church is the body of Jesus Christ.[1] The idea of ownership is absolute here. As a man's body is his own, and not another's, so the church is the church of Christ, and not of another.

A still more significant figure is used. Paul said that he had espoused the Corinthians to one husband, that he might present them as a pure virgin to Christ.[2] He represents the relationship of the church to Christ as that of espoused wife to husband. Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.[3] Nothing could emphasize more strongly than these statements the right of Christ to call the church his own, and to give the church his own name. So that, not only is the expression "churches of Christ" justified, as applied to local con-

[1] Eph. 1: 22, 23. [2] 2 Cor. 11: 2. [3] Eph. 5: 25-27.

gregations of believers; but "church of Christ," as a designation of the whole body of his people, lies implicit in its very constitution and history. The idea of it is not only Scriptural. It is inseparable from the relation of Christ to the church.

It is Christ's relationship to the church that is emphasized by the use of this qualified name. The term is a proclamation. It announces the cause, of which the church itself is the effect. The church is the "called out." But it is Christ who calls out. The church is the building, but Christ is the Builder. The church is the spiritual temple. But Christ is the Spirit which both forms it and dwells in it. The church could not be, without Christ. It lives only in him, and by him.

On the other hand, the significance of the church to Christ is emphasized. It is the body which he weaves about himself, through which he does his work. It is the indispensable channel of his life as it continues to go out to the world in

saving power. It is eyes and lips and ears, and hands and feet, for him, as he pursues his ministry of salvation. It is the helpmeet for him in his work of building up a spiritual race.[1] It is the fullness of him that filleth all in all.[2]

THIRD—CHURCH OF GOD. This term is used in ten instances in the New Testament, and only by the apostle Paul. There is a significance in the fact that he uses it so frequently in addressing Gentile Christians. Six of the instances are in the Epistles to the Corinthians. The Corinthian Christians were in the midst of a varied and sordid idolatry. They had themselves, in the old days, been "led away unto those dumb idols."[3] And the ruin of life which that induced is vividly portrayed.[4] They must remember that now they belong unto God. They have been chosen of Him—foolish and weak and base and despised though they might have been. He has created them anew, and they are "of him in Christ

[1] Gen. 2: 18. [2] Eph. 1: 22, 23. [3] 1 Cor. 12: 2. [4] 1 Cor. 6: 9-11.

Jesus." He has given them Christ, and has compensated all their poverty and nothingness by making him unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.[1] Their heritage is a rich one, but it has its source and its reason in God, and their ultimate possession is in him. "All things are yours." But "ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."[2] It is the familiar thought, embodied in the promise of Christ when he assured the building of the church: "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."[3] This gracious promise, given first to men of Israel, is fulfilled unto poor, outcast Gentiles also. They have been built into the church, and the church is the church of God. What a sheet-anchor against the sweep of the old tides of passion and superstition which might otherwise drift them back into the degradation of the idolatrous life! The name would help mightily in keeping their faith single and their hearts pure.

[1] 1 Cor. 1: 26-31. [2] 1 Cor. 3: 21-23. [3] John 14: 20.

The term also occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians;[1] and with a similar pertinence. They had, in their old life, not known God, and had been in bondage to them that by nature are no gods.[2] They needed a powerful incentive to help them in the battle against the old lusts.

Paul uses it also in writing to the Thessalonians, who, under his preaching, had turned to God from idols, to serve a living and a true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.[3]

Outside of these instances, the term occurs only in the First Epistle to Timothy.

Timothy was the son of a Gentile father. While his mother was a Jewess, and he was evidently taught in the faith of Israel's God, his environment in his youth had been in the midst of idolatry. He was now, also, the evangelist in Ephesus. In that city and in all its vicinity, the worship of Diana the goddess had been, for long, the dominating religion. Her image was said to have

[1] Gal. 1:13. [2] Gal. 4:8. [3] 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 2:14.

fallen down from heaven. Her temple was one of the seven wonders of the world. Her worship was perhaps the most splendid and seductive of the pagan cults. The chief glory of the city of the Ephesians was that she was temple-keeper to the great Diana.[1] The most dreaded calamity was considered to be that the temple of this noted goddess should be made of no account and that she should be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshiped. The most effective appeal to popular passion was the necessity of guarding her honor.[2]

It was of the utmost importance that this young herald of Christ, in that stronghold of superstition, should keep a clear vision and a keen consciousness of the uniqueness and aloofness of the faith which he preached; and that the church in Ephesus should appreciate its true nature and high mission. Over against this absorption of Ephesus in the cult of the goddess, stood "the church of the liv-

[1] Acts 19: 35. [2] Acts 19: 27.

ing God."[1] There were the multitudes. Here were the few. There was the mass. Here were those who had been "called out." There was a dead idol, which could give to its worshipers no fellowship or blessing. Here was the living God, who had come to men in the person of his Son, through whom these had been built into him and made partakers of his life and power. There was error, blinding and enslaving its devotees; and the whole splendid ritual of the worship was a promoter and intensifier of that error. Here was truth, the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and the church was its "pillar and stay," to uphold it and defend it against the dominant delusion.

It is a position of superlative honor to which God has called the church. As his, it is the channel of his revelation. It has his message. The grace is given to it, through his ministers, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been

[1] 1 Tim. 3: 15.

hidden in himself. It is his purpose now to make known even unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, his manifold wisdom. And the church is the medium of this revelation. It was the purpose of the ages that this should be so—"purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."[1] The church is not an accident. It is not an unrelated thing in God's developing plans. It is the true objective of all the lines of divine revealment. It is the crown of all institutions for the manifestation of God. It is in and through the church that all the infinite measures of divine power are seen at their maximum in human redemption. God has his true glory "in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever."[2]

[1] Eph. 3: 8-11. [2] Eph. 3: 20, 21.

IX

THE NAMES, AND CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

BEYOND all names, those given to the followers of Christ are meaningful. Back of them stands an experience, and along with them goes an experience, unique in human life, and beyond all comparison the highest and most vital.

The experience of coming into the relationship which these various names designate, is a never-to-be-forgotten one. We may give it what name we choose—"conversion," "enlightenment," "change of heart," "new birth," "adoption." No term can fully express all it has meant to us. There are unspeakable things here. We have come to the consciousness of God. We have been made to feel his love, his truth, his grace, his forgiveness, his power. We have seen him in Jesus

Christ, and have come to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.

That experience is epochal. That knowledge is life eternal.[1] We have, in coming to it, passed out of death into life.[2] There has been indeed an enlightenment; for God, that said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.[3] There has been a "change of heart"; for these hard and impenitent hearts of ours have been melted into submission, so that we have become obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto we were delivered.[4] There has been a conversion, a turning unto God from the idols of our old life, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.[5] There has been a new birth; for we have been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;[6] and we have been born of water

[1] John 17: 3. [2] John 5: 24. [3] 2 Cor. 4: 6. [4] Rom. 2: 5; 6: 17. [5] 1 Thess. 1: 9. [6] 1 Pet. 1: 3.

and the Spirit.[1] There has been an adoption, foreordained through Jesus Christ according to God's good pleasure and grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.[2]

All this has been true of us—gloriously true. But what does it all mean? Can human language tell the meaning of it? The New Testament writers struggle with the precious burden of its significance. In words which the Holy Spirit teacheth, they convey to us what we may be able to grasp of it. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God."[3] "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."[4]

We have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot—the blood of Christ. Foreknown before the foundation of the

[1] John 3: 5. [2] Eph. 1: 5, 6. [3] 1 John 3: 1. [4] 1 John 1: 3.

world, he was manifested at the end of the times for our sake. Through him we are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory. Our faith and hope are in God.[1] We are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[2]

This change is revolutionary. Life is altogether another thing with us. We have become dead to sin. We have become alive with Jesus Christ. Our life is hid with Christ in God.[3] We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away.[4] We are out of the sinful life, out of its degradation, out of its power. Our old man was crucified with Christ—that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin.[5] All things have become new with us. We are being transformed by the renewing of our mind, and are proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.[6]

It was a foretaste of this full and

[1] 1 Pet. 1: 18-21. [2] 1 Thess. 1: 1. [3] Col. 3: 3. [4] 2 Cor. 5: 17. [5] Rom. 6: 6. [6] Rom. 12: 2.

rich experience which men felt when they first saw Jesus. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, and men beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father.[1] John the Baptist exclaimed, when he saw him: "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" His disciples immediately followed Jesus—drawn away from their first master by a new power. Coming into touch with him, they were conscious that they had found God. Andrew said to Simon Peter: "We have found the Messiah." Philip, when he had been drawn to him, said: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." Nathanael, when he had seen him, said: "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."[2] Peter voiced the feeling of all genuine believers in him when he said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One

[1] John 1: 14. [2] John 1: 29-49.

of God."[1] Even the half-heathen Samaritans said, "We have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."[2] Life, with these, had become an altogether different thing, in their knowledge of Jesus.

So is it always. The experience of coming to know Jesus and of being brought to God through him, is one the soul can not forget. How it burns itself into our consciousness, and abides a living flame, warming and lighting the whole stream of our life. It is not strange that men love to talk of their conversion. How vividly that event stood out in the consciousness of the apostle Paul—that time when it was the good pleasure of God, who had separated him, from his birth, to visit him even in his passionate opposition to Christ, to call him through His grace, and to reveal His Son in him, that he might preach him among the Gentiles.[3] He was ready to speak of that epoch in his life, to his own hostile countrymen, before crowned heads and bedecked officials, as

[1] John 6: 68, 69. [2] John 4: 42. [3] Gal. 1: 15, 16.

well as to the confidential friends of the new faith. And so the memory of it loomed large in Bunyan and in Wesley and in Moody, and the story of it added fire and force to the messages they gave to men. In every real Christian life it is a landmark in the soul's history. It is the passing out of darkness into light, out of despair into the realm of hope, out of condemnation into justification, out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Instead of the enmity and alienation which blighted our minds in the evil works of the old life, there is reconciliation and approval and peace. The soul has found its home, and is at rest. But, if the experience of coming into this high relationship is so precious and significant, what must be said of our enlarging experience as we go along in the relations indicated by the several names!

It is always a privilege to sit at the feet of a great master. What a confidence we feel as we think of the stores of knowledge which lie in his mind, ready to be drawn on, and what a joy as,

in response to our ignorance and need, the fountain sends forth its stream until we share with the teacher all his riches.

To be a disciple of Jesus is to reach the climax of that rich experience. He is the Master of the masters. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him.[1] We sit at his feet in utmost confidence that he is able to dispel our ignorance and to show us the Father.[2] And, as he makes us his friends as well, all the barriers are down, and the way is open for our complete enlightenment.

And how the fountain gushes! What a broadening and deepening stream flows to us from the mind and heart of Christ! Is not the Holy Spirit, which he gives unto us, the Spirit of truth?[3] Did he not say to his disciples, "He shall teach you all things; he shall bring to your remembrance all things that I have said unto you; he shall guide you into all the truth; he shall teach you the things to come"?[4] The past, the present, the

[1] Col. 2:3. [2] John 14:8. [3] John 14:17. [4] John 14:26; 16:13.

future, are here all assured. All the fountains of heavenly knowledge are here flowing. And, as we drink, we realize that Christ is sharing with us his treasures. As he knows the Father, so we come to know the Father. Indeed, the knowledge of Jesus Christ as our Teacher and Friend is knowledge of God. When Thomas made that pathetic request, which voices the deepest instinctive need of all our hearts, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[1] It is in harmony with this that the mission of the Holy Spirit to us is to cause us to see and know Christ. He speaks to us, not from himself, but from Christ. He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us, and so glorifies Christ. And, as we come thus to know Christ more fully, we come to know God.

Out of our ignorance and blindness we are led into an ever-growing knowl-

[1] John 14: 8, 9.

edge. And in that knowledge there are all the potencies of good. It is through the knowledge of Him that called us by his own glory and virtue that we are granted all things that pertain unto life and godliness.[1] Life takes on a different aspect. We are able to see things as they are. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, gives unto us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of our heart are enlightened, so that we know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.[2] Knowledge leads on to knowledge, and we are ever more able to discriminate and make our way sure. So that we put to the test the things that differ—we approve the things that are excellent, and we go on our way, sincere and void of offense unto the day of Christ.[3] Being filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

[1] 2 Pet. 1: 3. [2] Eph. 1: 17-19. [3] Phil. 1: 9, 10.

we are enabled to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work.[1] As Christ shares himself with us, we are conscious of coming constantly unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, until we know the mystery of God, even Christ; and in that knowledge enjoy eternal life. What an enrichment of life comes to us in living out the implications of the names "Christian" and "saint."

A great conviction is a dynamic. It stimulates every power of the mind and heart. It clarifies thought. It kindles the feelings. It rouses the will. It brings the whole spiritual man into action, and all his powers into alignment with its subject.

The Christian conviction is the mightiest of all. It involves the supremest issues ever presented to men. It is an acceptance of the truth, as against error. Jesus Christ is the Truth. All that opposes him, all that ignores him, all that denies or treats lightly his pre-

[1] Col. 1: 9, 10.

eminence and his claims, is error. In the Christian conviction Christ must have supreme place in all things.

Thus it was with Paul. To him Christ was all in all. He had the name above every name—and to him every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess his Lordship.[1] Thus it was to Peter. There was salvation only in the Christ. No other name is given, under heaven, or among men, wherein we must be saved.[2] Thus it was with John. "And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."[3]

No words can describe the effect which such a conviction must have on life. It thrills. It wakens, like a trumpet-blast. It stimulates, like a refreshing shower. It warms, like a genial blaze. It challenges all the powers of life to alertness and strenuous endeavor. It strengthens and stiffens the purposes and

[1] Phil. 2: 9-11. [2] Acts 4: 12. [3] 1 John 5: 11, 12.

makes the believer rock-like and invincible. When it has become an abiding conviction it is a life-force which pours forth continual enrichment.

When that conviction has led one into action, as it inevitably must do, the espousal of the cause of Christ follows. This sets before us a great field of endeavor. No life can reach its fruition without some worthy task. Our powers slumber and decay unless challenged and used. Great endeavor makes great life. We grow up to our ideals in striving to realize them. What we aim at makes us what we become.

No enterprise has ever presented to men so imperial a challenge as the cause of Christ. It makes its appeal to all classes of men, and to all types of mind, and always with world-dimensions. It is a business, with the "talents" as capital and the whole world as the marketplace.[1] It is a warfare, with the spirits of men as the battlefield, and the principalities and the powers, and the world-rulers of

[1] Matt. 25: 15.

this darkness, and the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, as the foe.[1] And the weapons of warfare, not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds—imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ.[2] It is a propaganda, with "all the nations" and "the whole creation" as the territory, and the enlistment of disciples for Jesus as the objective.[3] There is a wideness about it, and a glory about its purpose, that sweeps us out and carries us up to ever larger dimensions of life. We are conscious of a great fellowship. Jesus is the Captain of our salvation. His banner beckons us onward. His victory inspires us. His purpose moves us to heroic effort. His Kingdom is our ideal.

This enlistment and absorption in the cause of Christ works out for us that ultimate meaning of the name "Chris-

[1] Eph. 6: 12. [2] 2 Cor. 10: 3-5. [3] Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16.

tian"—character. Character is not an accident. It is not an endowment. It is a life-product. It is a result of stress and strain, of toil and tribulation, of choices and conflicts, of growth and maturity. Its quality is determined by the aims and objects we keep before us, and by the pathways and processes through which we seek to attain them. Christian character is a unique product. It grows only out of the Christian conviction and the Christian enterprise. It does grow here—a daily growth, an intensifying growth, like a growing tree which is always expanding the parts already formed, and always adding new parts, until it stands mature, crowned with life-giving fruit. We are rooted in the precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. We add all diligence on our part, and in our faith we supply virtue; and in our virtue knowledge; and in our knowledge self-control; and in our self-control patience; and in our patience godliness; and in our godliness love of the brethren;

and in our love of the brethren love. So we are reaching the climax of character, where it becomes like the character of God. Here we are secure. Here we stand, without stumble or fall. Thus we pass into the eternal Kingdom.[1]

And all this is marked by that other peculiarity—separateness from the world, holiness unto God. No more striking contrast exists than that between the man who holds with firm and intense conviction the truth of Christ, and the unbelieving world. There is a deep chasm of separation. On the one hand there is light, and the believer walks as in the day.[2] He sees the things that are invisible.[3] He makes his choices with the long view. He is content to wait on God. His life is hid with Christ in God, and he abides Christ's appearing for his own vindication.[4] He is joyful in his faith, with a joy that knows no measure.[5] He is not afraid, neither troubled by the evils about him.[6] He is steadfast, unmovable,

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[1] 2 Pet. 1: 1-11. [2] 1 Thess. 5: 4-6. [3] Heb. 11: 24-29. [4] Col. 3: 3, 4. [5] 1 Pet. 1: 8. [6] 1 Pet. 3: 14.

always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knows that his labor is not in vain in the Lord.[1]

On the other hand, the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them.[2] They walk in darkness. They see only the things that are near.[3] If they seek good, it is only the present good; on the other hand, too often, being past feeling, they give themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.[4] They are separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.[5] They are the sport of every malign power, "like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed."[6]

On the one hand there is the growing likeness to God. The new man is being renewed unto knowledge after the image

[1] 1 Cor. 15: 58. [2] 2 Cor. 4: 4. [3] 2 Pet. 1: 9. [4] Eph. 4: 19. [5] Eph. 2: 12. [6] Jas. 1: 6.

of him that created him.[1] He walks by faith, and, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, is transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.[2] He anticipates, with joyful confidence, the time when Christ shall be manifested, and, with the impediments of the earth-life done away, he shall see him as he is and be entirely like him.[3]

On the other hand, there is a dire progression in sin. Men shut their eyes against the light and hold down the truth in unrighteousness. Knowing God, they glorify him not as God, neither are thankful. They become vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart is darkened. Professing themselves wise, they become fools. They exchange the truth of God for a lie, and worship and serve the creature, rather than the Creator. They refuse to have God in their knowledge. They become filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness. They be-

[1] Col. 3:10. [2] 2 Cor. 3:18. [3] 1 John 3:2.

come without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful. They pass on to a blatant, defiant championship of evil, and, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but consent with them that practice them.[1] The nobility of life has vanished here; all is vanity and emptiness. These are "clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever."[2]

The separation is as wide as the universe. The sainthood of the Christian life lifts us to sublime heights.

And who can record the joys of sonship, and the rich pleasures and benefits of brotherhood, in the family of God? It is a royal estate into which we are brought. The infinite One is our Father. That means, first of all, infinite love,

[1] Rom. 1: 18-32. [2] Jude 12, 13.

following us and surrounding us in all the way. And the infinite love is the guarantee of all good.

What a peace and confidence that establishes in our hearts! How it drives away the worries that eat us up. How it breeds and fosters trust. How it makes us strong to endure. How it helps us to look at life, not piecemeal, but whole. How it anchors us against the tides of discouragement and despair.

God's love is not, with his children, an untried thing. It is his love that has begotten them. They have come into the new life at its bidding. His love sought them when far from him. His love paid the price of their redemption. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."[1] That is the revelation of God's love, both of its character, and of its measure. We can not doubt its genuineness. God commendeth his own

[1] John 3: 16.

love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.[1] If he has done that to make us his children, will he not continue his love, now that we are his children? Yea. Surely, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, that same love will finish the work so begun. And, since he who died for us now lives again, we, being reconciled, shall be saved by his life. There is abundant reason why we should rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.[2] Christ is the inviolable pledge of every blessing. We have him. The rest is secure. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?"[3]

This does not mean, however, that we shall escape trial and burdens, and, perhaps, suffering and sorrow. Fatherly love has various functions. Its aim and end is always the welfare of the child.

[1] Rom. 5: 8. [2] Rom. 5: 10, 11. [3] Rom. 8: 32.

Its method and expression may vary with the needs.

And how various are our needs. Sometimes it is for assurance and encouragement. And God assures us by his Spirit of our standing with him—children and heirs, and joint-heirs with his first begotten.[1] Sometimes, on the other hand, it is for rebuke, and curbing of our wild fancies, and discipline into the fitting spirit and attitude of children. Then his chastening rod falls upon us, and he sends us down into the valley of humiliation. But it is the chastening of love—our Father's blows; and the shadows come, that we may appreciate the sunshine all the more. We have no right to rebel against his chastening. Nor have we any reason to regard it lightly, nor to faint when we are reproved of him. It is all a part of his gracious ministry to us—a necessary part—if he would see his great object in us achieved. It is he whom the Lord loveth that he chasteneth; and often it is only after he

[1] Rom. 8: 16, 17.

has scourged us that he can receive and approve us. He is dealing with us as with sons, and what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? They indeed for a few days chastened us, as seemed good to them. God chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.[1]

This, after all, is one of the joys of sonship. When filial love sees the loving purpose of it all, and when the wholesome effect of it comes flooding our lives, as with healing after wounds and pain, the trials that our Father leads us through are seen to be among the most precious of our experiences. They let us into the secret of sonship, as perhaps nothing else can do. They bring us to a new consciousness of God's Fatherhood, and result in new fitness for sonship with him. So, we can rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope; and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath

[1] Heb. 12: 5-10.

been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.[1] Thus, our Father, through his loving use of the rod, cultivates within us the peaceable fruit of righteousness.[2]

There is an unspeakable joy in the consciousness of growth in the life of sonship. To feel that, daily, Christ is being formed in us;[3] and to know that Christ in us is the hope of glory.[4] To be conscious of a growing likeness to God our Father. To know that we are caught up into his life, so that we can say: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me."[5] To be coming evermore into a clearer vision of the abiding things, and to be enabled thus to appraise the things of the present at their true value.[6] To walk, in the midst of death, in the strength and calm of eternal life.[7] To anticipate the inheritance reserved in heaven for us, ready to be revealed in the last time, incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, and to know that the farther

[1] Rom. 5: 3-5. [2] Heb. 12: 11. [3] Gal. 4: 19. [4] Col. 1: 27. [5] Gal. 2: 20. [6] 2 Cor. 4: 16-18. [7] 2 Cor. 5: 1-10.

earth's prizes recede from us, the nearer this heavenly prize comes to us.[1] All this is the acme of personal human enjoyment.

And when, in the midst of all this exquisite personal experience of God as our Father, we remember that all his children are equal heirs with us, and sharers in these high privileges and unspeakable joys, the cup overflows. The commonwealth of the Christian life is a sublime conception. Before it, the barriers of race and caste and class go crumbling down. From it, the impulses of reconciliation and brotherly interest and ministry and harmonious fellowship spontaneously spring. The joy in sonship is personal. The joy in brotherhood is social. The experience of the Christian life is widened by the whole breadth of the community of believers. Time limits sink out of sight. We are fellow-heirs with patriarchs and prophets and apostles and martyrs, and the whole company of more humble and obscure, but

[1] 1 Pet. 1: 3-9.

not less worthy and acceptable, sons of God, in all the ages.

And what shall we say of that experience indicated by the name "servant"? Is there anything remaining of possible felicity to be allotted to this?

Yes, here is where all the gifts of God to us come to their fruition. Shall a great endowment have no purpose? Shall a great stream sink in the sand? Shall an ocean steamship, equipped in perfection and laden with valuables, stand and rot in the harbor? Christ has made us his disciples and friends, his believers and saints, his children and brethren, with all the rich endowments and potent impulses which these relationships involve, that we may serve with him. It is in service that we realize ourselves. It is in service that we achieve. It is in service that the real meaning of our relations with Christ comes to be understood and appreciated. It is only in service with Christ that knowledge and faith and conviction and character and sanctification, and the consciousness of

sonship and the rapture of brotherhood, can come to maturity.

And so, to be servants of Christ—bondservants—channels of his life, implements of his activities, yokefellows with him in his work, is the crowning experience, because it involves all others and brings them to fruition.

There is yet another thrill, a supreme one, in this already indescribable sensation of the Christian life. It is the experience of membership in the church of the living God. Here individual interest gives place to corporate feeling. The church is one. There is a solidarity in it that makes every member in it conscious that he is also a member of every other member.[1] So each one is responsible for the whole, and submissive to the whole. Self-interest loses itself in community interest. Life is at once limited in its liberties and enlarged in its activities. Service becomes infinitely significant. The individual is multiplied without limit, his strength magnified to the dimensions of the whole.

[1] Rom. 12: 5.

What dignity is conferred in the fact that this whole is the body of Christ and moves by his direction and achieves by his power. What glory is in the fact that this church is the church of God, through which he makes known, to all his creation, his wisdom and his glory. What boundless satisfaction in the consciousness of being used, in common with all God's people, for these great purposes of its Head. Here our personal joy in sonship finds its crown in a joy that is communal. If that was a river, bearing us majestically on its current, this is an ocean, whose depths we can not fathom, and whose shores we can not see.

It is seen that, under these New Testament names, all the essential experiences of the Christian life are included. Together, they designate all the relations into which God calls men in Christ Jesus, and cover the full fruits of redemption in human life through him. To live up to the measure of these names is to come into, and abide in, the perfect life.

X

THE NAMES, AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

NEW TESTAMENT names are common names. They are family names. They are all applicable to all Christ's followers. No one of them is a partisan name. No one of them is intended to distinguish its wearer from other followers of Christ. Each one identifies its wearers with the rest of Christ's people.

Every follower of Christ has a right to all these names. Not only so. Upon every follower of Christ is the obligation to wear all these names. For, has he not entered into the several relationships designated by them?

He has entered the school of Christ. Then, he is a disciple of Christ. He has been received by the great Teacher into a personal and intimate relationship.

Then, he is a friend of Christ. He has the conviction of the Christhood and divine Sonship of Jesus; he has espoused the cause of Jesus as his own; and he is striving to grow into the Christlike character. So, he is a Christian. He has been separated from the world unto this fellowship with Christ. He is, then, a saint. He has been born of God. Then, he is a son. He is in the family of God, so is a brother to all the children in the family. He has been bought with a price, so is not his own, but a bond-servant to Him who bought him—owned and directed by another. Each of these names implies for him the relationship which it designates, and each of the relationships implies its appropriate name. His duty is to wear these names and to live up to what they imply.

The honest wearing of these names is a great incentive to the life they indicate. The name "wife," worn by a virtuous woman, stimulates her to wifely conduct. The name "mother" has magic in it to raise woman to heroic sacrifice and ser-

vice. The name "president," or "king," carries with it a constant admonition to faithful administration. So, there is a reason in New Testament names, growing out of the need and duty of their wearer, and a stimulus to worthy achievement.

On the other hand, these names designate all one can be as a follower of Christ. There is no vital relationship to Christ conceivable which is not covered by these names. There is no possibility of growth in the Christian life that they do not provide for. All spiritual experiences are comprehended in them. They stand for the whole range of spiritual relationships, and for all heights and breadths of spiritual activity and development.

These names are uniting names. It may be that there are varieties of Christian experience. All Christians do not develop along identical lines, nor find themselves at all times at parallel points of progress. But all have common standing and equal privileges in Christ. Their

possibilities are similar, though their performance may differ. "Citizen" expresses possibilities common to all who wear that name, though some may not enter so fully as others, nor in the same order as others, into the qualities and experiences of citizenship. So the names of Christ's people, indicating their common standing with their Lord, and the possibilities that are equally before them all, as well as experiences into which all have entered, bind them together, unite their minds and hearts in him who has, without partiality, received them. This unity is a seven-fold unity, and should be without seam or schism.

It is evident that no other names than these are needed to describe the Christian life. New names are only needed when new things are to be designated. The qualities and relationships of the spiritual life, in both its individual and its collective manifestations, are provided for here.

If other names than these are adopted, or worn, by Christian people, it is only to

designate some relationship, or interest, which is not inherent in the Christian life; some extra interest, not common to the Christian relationship. Such a name designates a partizan interest; is made necessary by it. It is a partizan name. It thus stands for a breach of Christian unity, and is a means of maintaining and accentuating the same. It proclaims a defection from the ideal and the will of Christ.

There is a peculiar aptitude to this kind of defection. There is a multitude of extrascriptural names applied to the followers of Christ. Many of them contain no suggestion of New Testament usage or sanction. They are, one and all, partizan names. They have come because a multitude of partizan interests have been allowed to encroach on the unity of the family of God. The church has been disrupted, and the fragments have been named with characteristic names. These names, in their turn, have solidified the fragments and made the healing process difficult. Partizan interests are stubborn-

ly held, and carry their partizan designations along with them. It is a process that grows. Almost every day records the birth of some new party, committed to some partizan propaganda, and adopting some name that will adequately describe it. The beautiful and expressive names of the New Testament are shoved into the background, or, at best, yoked up with names that are alien to them and that continually overshadow them in popular usage. It is plainly evident that the apostolic injunction, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, has been largely made inoperative and impossible by the substitution of human names for those divinely given, and that it will not be possible to carry it out until the people of God are willing to abandon all such designations, and become content to wear only those which God has given.

A tendency equally pernicious with that spoken of, and more discreditable, if possible, is to use the family names in a partizan sense, to designate partizan interests. It is an amazing evidence of

perversity that the majority of these common names have been appropriated to designate partizan movements and interests in Christian history, and are, consciously or unconsciously, used, not in their common meaning, but with special and restricted significance.

The term "disciple" has come to be dignified with a big "D" and applied thus, in a denominational sense, to a group of people, numerous if considered by themselves, but few when compared with the whole company of believers; and it is being adopted with increasing complacency by many of these people as their especial designation, distinguishing them from others. Nothing is more evident than that this is a perversion of this name.

In a similar way we have a group of people who call themselves, and are known in the religious world as, "Friends." No one would deny that these good people are friends of Jesus. But, are they friends in any sense in which others of his people are not his friends? The name is evidently, with them, a de-

nominational name. In this use of it, its common, family use is lost sight of. It is perverted to a partizan use.

So there is a group which persists in its title to the name "Christian," applied especially to the church, but implied as the designation also of the individuals in that communion; and, professedly, this use of the name is a partizan, denominational use, distinguishing them from other bodies.

There are "Saints" also, of several varieties, but all using the term in a partizan sense, in direct violation of its original intention. It is, with them, a distinguishing name. Instead of identifying them with other Christians, their use of it signalizes their difference from others. The effect of it is to emphasize division rather than unity.

Several groups appropriate the term "Brethren," either unmodified, or with some qualifying phrase, but all with the restricted, distinguishing, partizan meaning.

Thus, five of the seven names con-

sidered have been segregated from their high place as designations of things that are common to God's people, intimations of experiences and relationships and interests that are common and inexpressively significant, to uses that are partizan and perverse. If we should presently have two other groups arise, one to appropriate the name "Children," and the other the name "Servants," with like sectarian significance, the process of prostitution would seem complete. And who can tell, in this age of new cults, how soon this climax of perversion may be reached!

No less has been the tendency to misuse the name "Church."

We have one great ecclesiastical organization, comprising, however, not half the true believers, claiming to be "the church"; and smaller groups making similar claims.

We have numerous groups, claiming each to be the "Church of Christ." And other groups each claiming to be the "Church of God."

Manifestly, in all these cases, the name is used in a partizan sense—as separative and not comprehensive; as distinguishing these groups from others, not identifying them with others. And just as manifestly, this use of the names is false, and these efforts to claim them in an exclusive sense an absurdity.

It is very evident that the lost unity of the church can only be restored by a return to the true use and significance of the New Testament names.

This can not be done by fiat. It can not be wholly done, if at all, as a matter of conference or legislation or compromise. It can only be done by the cultivation of the relationships indicated by the names.

Unity in Christ is a matter of life. It comes not from ourselves, but from him. It is possible only through the channels which he has opened, and by which he gives himself to us. These channels of approach are indicated by the names he has given us. If we keep the channels clear, he will come

to us in his fullness and unite us.

All the provisions of Christ for his people have this as their object. If he has given apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers, these are for the "perfecting of the saints." They are ministers, looking to the building up of the body of Christ. They seek the attainment of "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God," the growth in unity "unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." They seek to make the Christian proof against the power and distraction of all partizan interests; those winds of doctrine which toss us about and carry us to and fro, blown on us by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error. They would have us grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ. It is from him that all the body is fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part. It is thus that the body makes

increase unto the building up of itself in love.[1]

We must be disciples of Jesus in the true sense. All other masters must be dismissed. "One is your Teacher." Has it not been because we have listened to the counsels of men that we have become divided? There is nothing in the teaching of Jesus that can divide his people. His teaching unites. For the true disciple, there can be no other authority. "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

We must be genuine friends of Jesus. That means that he comes first. Nay, it means that he has the exclusive place in our hearts. No partizan interest, no party loyalty, can be allowed to intrude on that sacred compact. He invites us into the closest and most confidential relations with himself. How can we drag any alien interests with us as we go?

We must hold the great conviction of the Christian faith, the Christhood and

[1] Eph. 4: 11-16.

divine Sonship of Jesus, with genuine and earnest devotion. What a power a great conviction has to subdue and fuse all the hearts that hold it into one! And was there ever a conviction so mighty as this to break down division walls and bridge gulfs of estrangement, to reconcile and weld one-time enemies, and make the whole community of believers instinct with a common faith and purpose? It gathers up within itself all the high significance of history, all the deep meanings of religion, all the throbbing hopes of life. It lifts him who cherishes it out of the realm of the uncertain, the partial, the incidental, and gives him grasp of the sure, the essential, the complete. No man who holds that conviction intelligently and supremely can be a trifler or a partizan or a bigot. All men who hold it sincerely are impelled toward brotherhood and common interest. The creed of the Christ is a uniting creed.

And what must be said of the cause to which Christ summons his people. A great task is only second to a great con-

viction, as a unifying power. There is small need to cite instances of how a great enterprise has rallied men and nations, shaking them out of their selfishness, inspiring them with a common purpose, leading them to heroic sacrifice and resistless effort towards a common end. But has any cause so challenging as that of Christ ever bidden for man's heart? Can we stand in the face of it and cherish our little schemes, and fritter away our lives on our paltry interests, and magnify our party claims? Above all, can we drag these impedimenta after us on to the field of action, where every open door, every crying need and every impending peril is sounding loud the call for instant and utter consecration to the one task assigned us? It is small wonder that, on the heathen field, where petty partizan establishments have been left behind, and where the task of the church presents itself in its naked bulk and singleness, Christian men and women gravitate toward united effort, no matter by what name they have been formerly

called. The wonder is that Christian workers in the home fields can so misjudge the magnitude and urgency of their task as to waste their powers on interests that are not essential to it. When the espousal of the cause of Christ shall have become as hearty and genuine on the part of all his people as it was on the part of the early disciples, this can no longer be true.

Beyond all this is that character into which Christ would have his people continually grow. It is likeness to himself. And that, for his people, is unity.

And shall not the saints of God, who have been sanctified by the "one Spirit," and are indwelt and led and enriched by him, as members of the one body of which he is the life and power, live up to that holy estate? How impossible is the thought of division among those who are led by the Spirit of God. It is among the works of the flesh that we find it. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

These things are binding things, the very ligaments of life in the body of Christ.

Can the children of God continue to dishonor their Father, by unholy quarrels and distracting rivalries in the bosom of the family? Must it not be that a true appreciation of what it means to be born of God will smite to death all partizan feeling in our hearts? We are children of God. But "God is love." We are members in the family, and all God's children are our brethren. Can we do less than to be "all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded; not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing"?[1] This is the true family spirit. It must be cultivated. But it can only grow out of an increasing appreciation of our relationship to God as his children, and to our brethren as fellow-partakers with us of his grace. We must come to know our place with him. Then shall we know and honor both our privations and our privileges,

[1] 1 Pet. 3: 8, 9.

as children of God. Division is denied us there, out of our Father's love. Our blessed privilege is to be "perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment."[1] Our high duty is "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."[2]

We must, too, recognize and honor our servanthood. The thought of our past bondage to sin, of our helplessness and hopelessness in it, should humble us to the dust. The fact that Christ redeemed us from that lost condition by his own blood, should awe us into gratefulness, and fill us with joy. But, thus we are, all of us, his purchase, bought with a price, not our own, but his for possession and for service.

How utterly repugnant to this relationship is the thought of Christians being divided, designating themselves by divisive names, devoting themselves to partizan interests! We have no right to do thus. We can not do with ourselves as we please. Christ is our Master.

[1] 1 Cor. 1: 10. [2] Eph. 4: 3.

There is but one keyword to our lives—service.

That is a uniting word. We wait for the word of command. Our supreme question is: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" We move in obedience, not to a multitude of wills, but to one will; and in obedience to that our unity is perfected.

XI

THE NAMES, AND THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

NEW TESTAMENT names are forward-looking names. The relationships they describe have a future. Their significance is not static, but progressive. The Christian life is a growing life. Its terminus is in the distance.

As a Teacher, Jesus is ever unfolding the truth, leading his disciples to new heights and broader visions, so that we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.[1]

The possibilities here are beyond limit. Paul prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto his people a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; that having the eyes of their heart

[1] 2 Pet. 3: 18.

enlightened, they may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power toward those who believe.[1] It is a great objective that is placed before the disciple, in the field of knowledge. How expressive the terms used! "Spirit of wisdom and revelation." What suggestions of ripening and expansion and progress, in scholarship, are here. "Eyes of the heart enlightened." Could there be a more pertinent description of that sympathy with the subject which is a prime condition of all scholarship, and that accuracy of vision and fullness of understanding toward which all true scholarship looks? "That ye may know." Here is the gratifying objective of discipleship—certainty.

And what a sublime content has this certainty!

"The hope of his calling."

"The glory of his inheritance in the saints."

[1] Eph. 1: 17-19.

"The exceeding greatness of his power towards those who believe."

Is not this knowledge an immeasurable achievement for the disciple? Who can tell what is the power of Christ to keep and enrich and perfect the man who believes in him? Great power is needed. The believer is in the midst of perils. He has a warfare within him which threatens him, spirit against flesh and flesh against spirit.[1] It will be a strong arm that shall rescue him and keep him.

The disciple of Jesus comes into the experience of that power, and finds it exceedingly great. More than that, he is given an understanding of its full measure. It is the power of the infinite One. It is according to that working of the strength of his might—what dynamics are here!—which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only

[1] Gal. 5: 17.

in this world, but also in that which is to come, and put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.[1]

Not all at once does the disciple come into this fullness of knowledge. But this is the glorious objective toward which the great Teacher leads him on.

One result of this growth in the disciple is knowledge of "the hope of his calling."

There is a distinctively Christian hope. Israel as a people had its hope, which distinguished it from the nations around it. The hope of Israel was based upon the covenants of promise which God had made with the fathers and confirmed unto their children. There were two great objectives in that hope: first, the possession of the land of Canaan as a home; and, secondly, the coming of the Messiah, the seed of Abraham, to bless them, and, through them, to bless the

[1] Eph. 1: 19-23.

whole world. The first of these objectives had been realized when the liberated people had been put in possession of the land under Joshua. And yet there must have been an important sense in which that hope was constantly deferred, and, so, constantly cherished. For the possession of the land was but partial from the beginning. And, throughout their history, their tenure of it was made constantly uncertain and indefinite, by the encroachments of their enemies. Hostile tribes about them, and great nations more distant, crowded upon them, overran their heritage, wrested portions from their domain, carried them captive to distant lands, made them bondservants even in their own country. And this failure to realize to the full that first part of their hope, made them the more eager that the second part should be fulfilled. They came to conceive of the Messiah as a national deliverer who should rescue them from the power of their enemies, and confirm them in the undisputed possession of

the land promised to their fathers.

For the realization of this hope they looked to Jehovah their God. It grew out of his covenants. It rested upon his promise. Surely he would bring it to pass.

So, Jehovah came to be called "the hope of Israel."[1] He was their Saviour in the time of trouble. He had been the hope of their fathers.[2] "Happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God: who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is; who keepeth truth for ever."[3]

Israel's hope centered in a person. It involved many things. It was all comprehended in one thing—that they had Jehovah, a covenant-keeping God.

In contrast to Israel were the nations about them. They were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.[4]

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[1] Jer. 14: 8; 17: 13. [2] Jer. 50: 7. [3] Ps. 146: 5, 6. [4] Eph. 2: 12.

The Christian hope is a larger hope. It involves many things, and all of them vital. It is the hope of righteousness.[1] It is the hope of salvation.[2] It is the hope of the resurrection.[3] It is the hope of eternal life.[4] It is the hope of the glory of God.[5] It involves not only the destiny of the individual. The whole creation waits upon its fulfillment. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God; (for the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it;) in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."[6]

Like the Old Testament hope, the Christian hope is centered in a person, Jesus the Christ, God manifest. It grows

[1] Gal. 5: 5. [2] 1 Thess. 5: 8. [3] Acts 23: 6; 26: 7. [4] Tit. 1: 2; 3: 7. [5] Rom. 5: 2. [6] Rom. 8: 18-21.

out of what he has done and what he promises to do. As Jehovah was the hope of Israel, so the Lord Jesus Christ is our hope.[1]

The hope is to be fully realized with the appearing of Christ. As Israel's hope contemplated his first coming, the Christian hope contemplates his second coming. That is to be the climax of all blessing to the Christian. "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."[2] "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."[3]

How this hope is fed and buttressed by the word of God! If Israel's hope rested on God's covenant with the

[1] 1 Tim. 1: 1. [2] 1 Pet. 1: 13. [3] Tit. 2: 11-13.

fathers, the Christian's hope rests no less surely on the covenant promises of Christ. "Let not your heart be troubled," he says to his people; "believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."[1]

This is Christ's "covenant of promise" with his people. That covenant was confirmed by the heavenly visitors immediately on Christ's departure from earth. "Why stand ye looking into heaven?" they say. "This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."[2]

It was in the faith of this covenant with their Lord that the apostles went out on their mission. This coming again of their Master was a ringing note in the gospel they preached. It was the

[1] John 14: 1-3. [2] Acts 1: 11.

crowning glory in that vision they flung before the eyes of men to induce them to turn to him. The cross was held before them, with its burden of sacrifice, sufficient to cover all their sins, and its story of love so great as to assure them a welcome. The resurrection was affirmed, an undeniable evidence of victory, a demonstration of power which even the grave could not defeat. The coronation was proclaimed, an announcement of God's eternal purpose in Jesus Christ fulfilled, in defiance of human perversity and satanic hate. The Holy Spirit was promised in the name of the King, a life-power, ensuring to the believer "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and daily victory along the way. Thus did they challenge men's thoughts to God's highway of mercy and forgiveness and adoption and spiritual enrichment and power. But this alone would have been an incomplete vision. The climax of the divine inducement to men was the covenant promise of Christ's return for his people. "And

that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old."[1]

It was this complete vision that gave the gospel its power. To the Jew it was the fulfillment of the hope of Israel, in a larger and more glorious sense than he had ever anticipated; and it was, in addition, the bringing in of that "better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God."[2] To the Gentiles it was the opening of a door that had, for long, been closed to them. To the people who had been without hope, and without God in the world, "the hope of the gospel"[3] was preached; and they "turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come."[4] This is "the hope of

[1] Acts 2: 22-38; 3: 18-21. [2] Heb. 7: 19. [3] Col. 1: 23. [4] 1 Thess. 1: 9, 10.

his calling." This is the "living hope," unto which we are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.[1] It is the all-inclusive hope, summing up in itself and making inevitable all the spiritual hopes of Christian hearts. The resurrection is ensured in it. For is it not at his coming that they that are Christ's shall be made alive?[2] The life eternal shall be confirmed in it. For the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.[3] It will usher us into the glory of God. For will not the Son of man come in his glory, and all the angels with him? And shall not the blessed of his Father be called to inherit, with him, the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world?[4] Is it any wonder that the apostles proclaimed it to sinners, and that they kept the saints perpetually in mind of it through their Epistles, and that the Apocalypse makes it the pivot

[1] 1 Pet. 1: 3. [2] 1 Cor. 15: 23. [3] 1 Cor. 15: 52-54. [4] Matt. 25: 31-34.

on which the most sublime drama of world destiny that has ever been conceived, is made to turn? It is vital in the Christian faith. Without it all the wonders of the gospel story are but as a pyramid without an apex. With it, all that goes before it has its justification, and all that comes after it has its guarantee. It gives meaning to all that precedes it, as the ripened fruit gives meaning to root and branch and bloom. It makes faith vibrant, and love triumphant. With this hope in us, we can not drift. For it is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil, fastening us to eternal things.[1] With it we will not walk in darkness, nor stumble, nor sleep. We will watch and be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love. It will be a helmet upon our head, to protect us from evil.[2] With it we will be kept from the defilements of the flesh. For we expect that when he shall be manifested, we shall be like him. We shall see him

[1] Heb. 6: 18, 19. [2] 1 Thess. 5: 1-8.

even as he is—and he is pure. Even so, with our hope set upon him, must we purify ourselves, that we may be ready for him.[1] We are to let it have its full sweep in our lives; rejoicing in it;[2] abounding in it;[3] showing diligence unto the full assurance of it;[4] "continuing in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel."[5] Thus may we be presented holy and without blemish and unreprovable before Him.

It is in the light of this hope that New Testament names are seen in their supreme significance. It will be in the realization of that hope that the relationships they designate will come to fruition. The disciple will come, in that, to perfect knowledge. His life here is a progress in the knowledge of Christ. But it looks toward perfection. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." We see, now,

[1] 1 John 3: 2, 3. [2] Rom. 5: 2. [3] Rom. 15: 13. [4] Heb. 6: 11. [5] Col. 1: 22, 23.

in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face. We know, now, in part. We shall know, then, fully, even as also we have been fully known.[1] That full knowledge is not possible this side of the fulfillment of the Christian hope. We enter eagerly into the race for the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. The excellency of it attracts us, and moves us to give up all things and count them but loss, that we may gain it. We "gain Christ," as Teacher, with abounding joy. But we find that, to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death," which is the essence of that knowledge we are seeking, is sometimes a long road, and has its terminus only where we shall be made to share his own victory over sufferings and death. We, too, must "advance into the out-resurrection, that from among the dead," and that climax is where He appears for his people. So we must go on. We have not already attained the objective, nor

[1] 1 Cor. 13: 9-12.

reached perfection. That for which we have been laid hold on by Christ Jesus is yet to be laid hold on by us. So, like the racer, we must forget the things that are behind, and stretch forward to the things which are before, and press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. If we would be perfect, we must be thus minded. And for the enlightenment of our imperfect mind, God grants his sufficient revelation.[1] What a glory it will be to the disciple to have broken through the mists and clouds that obscure the sun, and to have reached the summit where vision is unobstructed and the whole landscape lies in light! The mazes of our earthly pilgrimage will there have all converged upon the broad highway. The puzzles will all be solved. The immature thought which has now tantalized us, now tempted us to halt on our way, will have merged into perfect knowledge. We will have inherited to the full with Him in whom all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge are hidden.[2]

[1] Phil. 3: 8-15. [2] Col. 2: 3.

There the friend of Jesus will come to the full meaning of friendship. Its glorious meaning is measurably impressed on us here. It is a wonderful thing to be made a confidant of Jesus Christ; to have him make known unto us all things that he himself has heard from the Father.[1] What a treasure is here committed to us. Have we not felt the thrill of pleasure, of grateful joy, as some friend has let us into some secret of his own heart, something that he could not tell to others, because they could not understand? And what heavenly joy fills our hearts as Jesus talks to us as though in secret places, and tells us the deep mysteries which the Father has committed to him. These are things that Jesus can not tell to every one. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him." He could not understand them. There is a preparation of heart necessary to the appreciation of the things Jesus has to tell, "because they are spiritually

[1] John 15: 15.

judged." Only he who has become a friend with Jesus can receive them.[1] One of these great secrets is the fact of his coming again. He does not tell us the exact time, for he himself has not heard that from the Father.[2] But the fact he has told us. How striking the difference between the friends of Jesus and the unbelieving world, in respect to this! The natural man can not receive it. It is foolishness unto him, indeed. He can see no need of it, no way to it, no probability of it. He walks in his lusts and scoffs at the Christian's hope. "Where is the promise of his coming? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."[3] So he says, "Peace and safety." He walks in darkness, and is drunken, and sleeps.

But the friend of Jesus is not asleep. He is not in darkness. He is a son of light and of the day. He walks in the awareness of his Lord's approach. He crowns himself with the hope of salva-

[1] 1 Cor. 2: 14, 15. [2] Matt. 24: 36. [3] 2 Pet. 3: 3, 4.

tion; salvation to which God has appointed him through the Lord Jesus Christ; and which is to be realized at his appearing.[1]

But with all the fruit of friendship in the present, there awaits the believer a higher joy when the event shall transpire. When the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, the friends of Christ shall meet him. The dead in Christ shall rise first, and those that still live shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so they shall ever be with the Lord.[2] How richly shall the long absence of the great Friend be compensated for in that union! How the meanings of his love which have escaped our poor vision here, will stand out in that clear light. We shall know then, as we can never know until we see him in his glory, the immeasurable significance of his announcement: "I have called you friends."

[1] 1 Thess. 5: 3-9. [2] 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17.

And, will it not be in that same hour that we shall understand in its fullness all that "Christian" signifies? That will be the hour when the true significance of Christ will be realized. The conviction of the Christian may be ridiculed now; the cause which he serves may be discounted; his character as a follower of the Christ lightly esteemed. And this misjudgment of the world is always hard to bear, and not infrequently discouraging. But when his Lord shall come in glory and great power, and all the angels with him, the faith of the Christian, and his faithfulness, will be alike vindicated. And he himself will enter into the amazing significance of what, in feebleness and faltering, he had given himself to cherish and to achieve.

It is unto the issues of this event that the saints are separated. What a meaning will be given to holiness, when we shall see Him as he is! That was a great vision that the old prophet saw by the side of the river, when before him was a man clothed in linen, whose

loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz, whose body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like unto burnished brass, and his voice like the voice of a multitude. It was not surprising that there remained no strength in him, and that his own comeliness was turned in him into corruption.[1] Nor is it strange that a later seer, when he saw one like unto a Son of man, whose head and whose hair were white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto burnished brass, and his voice as the voice of many waters, with seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of his mouth, and his countenance as the sun shining in his strength, should have fallen at his feet as one dead.[2] What shall it be when this glorious Being shall break out of the unseen and come on the clouds of heaven, where every eye shall see him, and shall call his people forth to meet him and be

[1] Dan. 10: 4-8. [2] Rev. 1: 13-17.

with him? Is not the whole logic of the separated life exhibited in this? How shall men meet him if they have walked with the world and their garments are spotted with the flesh?[1] But if they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, how shall they fail to join that triumphal throng which, with waving palms and exulting voices, shall proclaim him?[2] It is to this joyful end that the God of peace himself sanctifies us wholly, even that our spirit and soul and body may be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.[3]

And surely to the children of God, the brethren in his family, this is a crowning event. They have been begotten unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That hope involves an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and unfading. It is laid up for them in heaven, a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, ensured to those who, by the power of God, are guarded through

[1] Jude 23. [2] Rev. 7: 9, 10. [3] 1 Thess. 5: 23.

faith. It is a matter of great rejoicing, as it is viewed in the distance. Even severest trials are cheerfully borne, and but purge the faith, as gold is tried in the fire, that the testing of the faith may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.[1] And when that revelation shall have taken place, shall not these heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ be found in possession of their heritage? Yea; for it is from the Lord they shall receive the recompense of the inheritance; for they serve the Lord Christ.[2]

Not less significant will this climax be to the servant of Christ. Christ's coming is to be not only a great ending, but also a glorious beginning. He is coming to take his great power and to reign.[3] And in that age-long Kingdom in which his sway shall be from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth, there will be call for many-sided service. How glorious will be the realization of our redeemed life in the service

[1] 1 Pet. 1: 3-7. [2] Col. 3: 24. [3] Rev. 11: 17.

of the King! Here will be the sublime issue of all the powers of our salvation. Complete in knowledge and in love and in commitment to him, as well as in spiritual fitness and equipment, our Lord will set us tasks commensurate in reach and dignity with the high place to which he has brought us, and we shall serve him day and night in his temple.[1]

[1] Rev. 7: 15.